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ERNEST GRAHAM:

A Doctor's Story.

"Ficta voluptatis causâ sint proxima veris."

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ERNEST GRAHAM:

A Doctor's Story.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES RELATIVES WHO FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN THIS HISTORY.

In a certain London suburb, which for convenience we will call Crofton, there stood not long ago a Gothic villa. Its tenants were a gentleman of five-and-forty, a young lady of twenty, and a youth of eighteen. The two last were brother and sister; the elder of the party was their uncle, and all three signed themselves Travers. The uncle, by braving a bad climate, had made a good sum of money in a few years; and when, after his return home, his brother's children were left orphans, a kind heart prompted him to give up bachelor habits, furnish a house in a pleasant neighbourhood, and offer shelter and provision to his bereaved relations. To the assertion that Mr. Travers had a kind heart I have committed myself, and his adoption of two orphans may be thought sufficient to prove the

fact; but had his acquaintances been asked to testify on the subject, a charitable disposition would have been the last thing accorded to him. One would have remarked, a very singular man! another, a dreadful cynic! a third, a horrid quiz! and a fourth, a spiteful, opiniated noodle! In reality, he was one whose course of life had been a little rough; whose intercourse with men had unfolded more bad than good; and so he had become distrustful of the virtues, and sarcastic on the weaknesses, of his fellow men. He had a clear perception of human frailties; exposed them mercilessly as occasion offered; and, without caring if he displeased his audience, ridiculed them with unsparing tongue. He rarely opened his mouth without uttering a sarcasm, yet he never laughed at a man behind his back; and scandal he despised as the meanest of sins. He was a thorough Christian, highly charitable, and his left hand knew not what his right hand gave.

Willie, his nephew, was about to enter the battle of life as a medical student. He possessed no remarkable traits of character; he was full of hope, full of ambition, and full of conceit; enthusiastic, affectionate, and good-tempered, and he regarded a latch-key and independence as synonymous terms.

Edith, sister to the above, was a fair, loveable girl, remarkably devoted to her brother, and possessed of virtues difficult to paint in a few words; they must therefore be allowed to develop themselves as this history proceeds.

It is the 30th of September, and evening. Tomorrow is "speech day" at the medical schools: then

prizes are to be distributed, and novices will begin their study of disease. Willie will be amongst these latter, and is now talking over the tea table on the coming event.

"I assure you, uncle," he said emphatically, "I would not give my chance of success in life for any ready-made position in science whatever. Take Sir Charles Brownlow for instance,—I suppose he is the greatest physician that we have at present;—if some good genius offered to guarantee me his ring in the ladder, provided that I would swear never to mount higher, I declare upon my honour that I would not accept it."

"A very fair specimen of juvenile conceit," observed Mr. Travers. "That speech of yours should be carefully preserved, for it shows at a glance the minds of most young men beginning life. Their stock-in-trade consists chiefly of a great capacity for food and admirable digestions; and, upon the strength of these qualities, each sneers at his father's slowness, and thinks himself a piece of machinery patented to unravel the whole of nature's secrets in one day."

"You are too severe on Willie!" broke in Edith, speaking quickly. "He does not mean to be conceited, but is only ambitious and full of hope; and, I am sure, with his abilities, he might attain a high position if he chose."

"With his—abilities, repeated Mr. Travers consideringly. Have the goodness, my dear Edith, to explain what you mean by that phrase."

"What everybody means by it!" replied Edith. "If a person is clever, if he can do with ease what

others do with difficulty; then, I say, he has good abilities."

"Thanks for your translation," said Mr. Travers; "the expression is so loosely applied that it requires definition. If Willie has the power of doing a proposition of Euclid or an algebraic equation in less time than the generality of students, in common parlance certainly he would be said to have good abilities; though, in my mind, his superiority of intellect would be better expressed by saying that he had more power of concentrating his ideas than most of his neighbours. Many a man who is called a genius, owes his honour entirely to the power of concentration. In fact, genius may generally be rendered—moral courage; for the power of bringing ideas to a focus cannot, I think, be often a natural gift, but must depend upon the power of resisting the seductive imaginations which try to force themselves upon serious thought. If Willie is able to keep his mind to a subject without wandering, and if he has at the same time perseverance, he might, as you say, attain a high place in the world. But really, my dear, when you spoke of good abilities, I feared that your brother had been putting potassium in water, or relighting tapers in oxygen, or turning mahogany with a lathe, or any of the regular and unmistakeable marks of genius."

"You seem determined to quiz me, uncle," said Willie good-temperedly, "and I am pretty well used to it, so go ahead. Whether I have any abilities, or concentration, or genius, or whatever you please to call it, I don't know. I did not intend to make myself out clever by what I said just now, but merely uttered

the thoughts that came into my head. I am brimfull of ambition at present, and cannot prevent a little of it from running over occasionally."

"Most of your profession would regard Sir Charles Brownlow as having reached the summit of ambition," observed Mr. Travers. "After a long life of intense toil he has climbed to the top of the tree; and gained, what? A position so enviable that the muddiest, hungriest 'Arab' of London streets would not change places with him. Sir Charles Brownlow's race is run, the next step that he takes in life will be to death; and the ragged boy prefers starvation and tatters to mouldering honourably in the dust as a successful man. Ambitious men strain, and strive, and groan their best years out to acquire fame; gain it at the end of life, and die."

"Do you think ambition wrong, then?" asked Edith.

"A difficult question," my dear girl, "and one that men have often asked themselves and others. My answer, I fear, will be agreed to by few. I deem no ambition pleasing to God except the ambition to do good: in my opinion the pursuit of fame for its own sake is unlawful, but allowable if sought only because it gives power for good. Willie is beginning his profession with false notions—'How high can I rise in it?' he asks, and thinks himself entering a noble struggle to solve the question. His query should be—'What good can I do in it?' Instead of considering what course of study, or what specialty will best raise him to the required pitch of exaltation, he should seek the sort of knowledge that will enable him to be of most

use to others; he should select for practice a locality where he can be of most service, not only to the paying, but also to the pauper sick; he should work day and night, not to be pointed at as the man who discovered this disease or cured that, but to try how many good actions he can cram into the few years allotted to him. Every profession or trade should be commenced with the question—'What good can I do in it?' This is the only ambition of the slightest service at the end of life. I see that you don't agree with me, Willie; but think it over, my boy, and some day you will own me right." So saying, Mr. Travers retired to his study to spend the evening, as was his custom after tea.

"I have a thorough appreciation of my uncle's kindness and good qualities, but I wish he were not such a wet blanket," said Willie to his sister as soon as they were alone.

"He was rather depressing, but he meant it kindly," replied Edith. "There were you, Willie," she added laughing, "with your face flushed and eyes sparkling, full of excitement about to-morrow; and now you are wrapped in uncle's dripping blanket, totally extinguished."

"I certainly am a little put out, if that is what you mean. It was that dissertation on ambition that riled me; I would have argued the point if I had not feared an endless discussion."

"Which you would certainly have got the worst of," returned Edith. "I am afraid that uncle is right," she added, after a moment's hesitation.

"You think ambition sinful also! Why, you fool-

ish girl, what state would the world be in if people had always been of your opinion? How should we have progressed in arts, science, or literature without ambition? What would be our social condition now? Instead of a delicate young lady in a silk dress, sipping bohea from a china cup, I should see a boisterous she-savage clothed in skins, grubbing up roots like a wild pig."

"I suppose you mean that there could be no improvement without the incentive of fame," said Edith, laughing.

"That is exactly what I was driving at. It is the hope of becoming famous that urges clever men to work; without this inducement they would do nothing. Fancy me shutting myself in my study day by day, grovelling amongst books and papers, without the prospect of a world-wide reputation to urge me on. Think of enduring wet towels, aching heads, green tea, and loneliness, purely for the sake of improving one's mind, and benefiting society; the thing is impossible, Edith, and there is an end of it."

"Uncle would ask," said Edith quietly, "what have you gained after all this toil, by finding yourself famous."

"Gained! why everything, of course; a high standing in the world; the respect of one's fellows; and a name that will be handed down with honour to posterity."

"I can't argue the point with you," said Edith, humbly; but if I were a man I should not care one atom to be famous. The great point appears to be that your name should be remembered by other people

after your death; and I cannot see how this can benefit you. If I had found out something grand, and set everybody talking about me; and then if I were to fall sick and find myself about to die; I should altogether forget my discovery, I should be too ill to care for it; my thoughts would be full of death; I should be longing and yet dreading to meet Jesus, and hear him speak to me face to face; whilst all this world would seem so unimportant, that as for caring if my name were remembered by posterity, or not, the idea would never even enter my head; and as after death I should not be aware if the world recollected me, the question if they were likely to do so would not seem of much consequence."

"I never could reason with girls," said Willie; "they are so dreadfully illogical; so let us drop the subject, and go on with David Copperfield; we have ever so many more pages to finish, and this is my last evening of reading aloud."

Edith sighed as she got out her work and composed herself to listen. These evening readings were very pleasant to her, and now they must terminate; she would have but little of her brother's society after to-night; he had been her constant and almost her only companion, and the prospect of losing him filled her with sorrow.

"Uncle says he always pities a person who reads aloud," observed Willie, searching in his book for the last read page. "He declares that the reader seems to have shifted the responsibility of the work from the author's shoulders to his own, and is as anxious to elicit laughter and marks of approbation from his

audience as if he had written the book himself. He is restless over a tedious description of scenery, or bit of genealogy; tries to emphasize point into pointless sentences; is thoroughly ashamed of a stupid passage, and at the brilliant parts flushes with conscious pride, and receives the approval of his hearers as his just desert."

"You should have told me uncle's remarks after reading," said Edith, laughing; "I shall be on the look-out now to see if you exemplify them."

"You would like to see me losing my individuality and personating Mr. Dickens, I daresay," replied Willie; "but you will be disappointed, for I intend to read in a milk-and-water fashion, like a schoolboy spouting Shakespeare."

CHAPTER II.

EVENING OF THE FIRST OF OCTOBER, AS SPENT BY THE STUDENTS OF ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL.

At St. John's Hospital, there is an uncomfortable looking chamber of immense size. Its walls are decorated with ponderous slabs, setting forth in fat capitals the names of the chief supporters of the charity— each by the side of the amount he has subscribed. Near these memorials of good deeds, hang full-length portraits of famous surgeons and physicians, who have done St. John's the honour there to study, and afterwards to teach. By a chain that might serve at a pinch as a ship's cable, the ceiling supports a chandelier of colossal proportions; windows of plate glass, grand but dirty, at four intervals interrupt the wall; and the floor, glistening and carpetless, is spotted with chairs severe in aspect, and baize-covered tables of scholastic hue. To-night, October 1st, tables and chairs have vanished, and shoe leather sprinkles the floor instead; boots of every description—square-toed Bluchers of men of note, side-spring patents of men of no note, delicate kids of sisters, cushion-like kids of mothers, laced cloth bags of gouty grans, crucially-tied slippers of stern old maids—press the slippery boards in all

directions. One patent boot of large dimensions, together with a slipper, globular in shape, stand aloof proudly from their brother leathers; they encase the sound and the afflicted foot of his more than Majesty, the Lord Mayor of London. This exalted functionary, in solitary grandeur on his chair of state, occupies the east end of the room; whilst the sides, north, south, and west, are crammed with students and professors, and the friends of each. The ladies of the party are seated on rows of forms, and the gentlemen stand talking to them with as much comfort as they can; whilst the middle of the room is kept clear to enable prizemen to advance, and receive their rewards from the hands of the mayor.

Willie is here with Mr. Travers, and Edith; and near them lounges a well-dressed, pleasant-looking young man, with an exceedingly well-cultivated pair of whiskers. He has been gazing curiously at the trio, and particularly at Edith, and presently whispers to his neighbour—a pale, dissipated-looking youth—"Freshman and sister, for a sovereign, Stevens! But who on earth is the elder of the party? I can't make him out; he's too old for the girl's brother, and scarcely old enough for her father."

"Why, husband, to be sure; anybody can see that, and an uncommonly pretty little mate he has got, too," replied Stevens.

"I suppose it must be so," said the other; and he spoke with a half sigh.

"Just married, I should guess," rejoined Stevens; and back from the honeymoon in time to see his newly-acquired brother start shop."

"The young one looks too good for this blackguard profession, said he of the whiskers, scornfully; he is fitter for a soldier, or a sailor, than a grubby apothecary."

"Would not the tinker or tailor suit him better?" suggested Stevens.

"He could not do much worse than he has done. With the day I saw an hospital, the curse of my life began; had I but my time over again, I would fight with my father tooth and nail, before he should force me into this dirty trade; but I was in debt, you know, deeply, and over nervous about it; duns came knocking and pestering every hour, and so I was obliged to compound with the governor; he paid the creditors, and I came here."

"And yet you came out splendidly in 'exam.,' with all your hatred of the work," said Stevens. "My opinion is, Stanley," he added in a decided tone, "that you are too bitter against the profession; I don't get on in it because I abominate study of any sort; but if I were obliged to do something—and I shall be some day—I would sooner drive about seeing patients than anything else."

"The actual profession of curing the sick is well enough," said Stanley; "it is the people in it that I complain of. How, for instance, any one pretending to be a gentleman, can disgrace his diploma by setting up an open shop, and selling soap and tooth-brushes over the counter, I cannot conceive! A lady passes a corner shop, redolent of perfumes, and gorgeous with variously coloured water in crystal globes, and glancing at the name over the door, she reads, 'Jones, surgeon, &c.' What can she reasonably infer but

that 'surgeons, &c.' keep shops? and from that time she treats her medical adviser more distantly than before, and begins to doubt the propriety of visiting his wife. Then, look how many general practitioners lower themselves by charging for medicine, instead of for their time; sending in bills for blisters, pills, and potions, as the grocers do for figs and raisins! Look how a medical man has often to haggle before he can get a proper fee! how men of refined intellect are treated by their patients like butchers and bakers! and then tell me, if you can, that ours is a profession fit for a gentleman."

"There are shabby fellows who do shabby things, in every profession; and I don't see that ours is worse than another.

"Then again," Stanley continued, without heeding this remark, "think of the disgusting sights we have to endure, the loathsome things we have to touch, the filthy smells, the close rooms, and the danger of being knocked on the head by typhus, or small-pox; remember that we are doomed to these abominables for life; and if you don't feel nausea, hatred, and repugnance, whenever you think of your future fate, you haven't the feelings of a man, and ought to!"

Having flung this grammatical finale at his companion as a *coup-de-grâce*, Stanley drew himself up with the air of a man who felt he had been forcible, and waited the result. The only visible effect upon Stevens being the production of a languid yawn, he turned away in contempt, and fell to regarding Edith again. Stevens also turned his eyes in her direction, but fixed them not on Edith, but her uncle.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, after staring at Mr. Travers for some time, "I know that man. I did not recognize him at first with his great black beard; he is an especial friend of my father's—name, Travers, and hangs out at Crofton. I can't endure the fellow, do let us get out of his way; if he sees me, I shall have to do the honours of the place."

"Don't bolt; come and speak to him, and introduce me. There! he is looking this way now; it is too late!"

Willie had called attention to the portrait of a celebrity over the young men's heads, and Mr. Travers in looking round had perceived Stevens. Knowing him to be a disreputable youth, Mr. Travers would willingly have avoided a rencontre; but not liking to be uncivil for the father's sake, he received a shake of the hand with apparent cordiality, and introduced him to his nephew and niece, Stevens afterwards performing a like office for his friend Stanley, and bringing a blush to that gentleman's countenance whilst introducing Miss Travers, by the unmistakeable emphasis that he laid on the "miss."

"Have you been long at the hospital?" Mr. Travers inquired of his new acquaintance.

"Two years," replied Stanley; "to-day I attain the dignity of being classed amongst the third year's men—the only dignity that I have attained at St. John's by the bye, and one not difficult to get, if you only stop long enough."

"You are not one of the successful men of to-day, hen, I presume?"

"Why, as to that," answered Stanley carelessly; "I rather think the respectable old boy over there

has some little article for me, but it is not of much consequence."

"That is his modesty; he came out second of his year, gets a prize of twenty pounds, and scarcely worked a bit!" said Stevens triumphantly.

"I beg your pardon," returned Stanley, "I worked hard, very hard whilst I was at it, though that certainly was not for long; my coming out so high was a slice of luck, I did not deserve it."

"One of uncle's concentrators," said Edith to her brother, *sotto voce.*

Willie smiled, and asked Stanley who was the winner of the first prize.

"That singular-looking fellow in the corner," replied Stanley, indicating a bright-eyed, intelligent-looking youth with a wondrous shock head of hair, which seemed as though comb had never touched it from his earliest infancy. "He seldom reads less than twelve hours a day, and the first of October is about the only holiday that he has in the year."

"He will work himself into a fever soon," said Stevens; "and a good thing for him, if it is only for the advantage of getting his head shaved."

"You see that dried-up little man half a dozen yards to your left," said Stanley, addressing Edith; "he is to do the introductory address—Jupiter! he is going to begin now; see, he is moving towards his place! Now, my fellow students! your energies are to be fired, your emulation roused, and your morals touched up; get your minds ready to resist the shock, for little Parchment is about to charge." So saying Stanley folded his arms with much gravity, and composed himself to listen.

The lecturer, after a few preliminary observations, addressed himself particularly to the new students, and spoke as follows :—

"Most of you have come from the country; young and inexperienced you are about to live in London for the first time; you are all more or less anxious to 'see life,' and fancy this city to be the place to show it you. My friends! with all earnestness I warn you from this devilish snare. The most promising pupil that I ever had was nearly lost through 'seeing life' —life in your sense of the term, as typified by the dissipation of this metropolis. He entered our hospital with high hopes, strong resolutions, and a profound love of science; he thought his the most interesting, the most noble profession of all. There should be no difficulties that he would not conquer, no problems that he would not solve, not a mystery of chemistry or pathology that he would not elucidate: patient investigation and unflinching toil must, he thought, in time break every barrier, and make him a Galen of to-day. He came to London. The first morning was spent amongst his books and papers, not in reading, but arranging his stupendous plans. The abridged works for students he despised; nothing would do for him but special treatises, penned by men who had given a lifetime to the study of the one thing of which they wrote. Elaborate notes of many works he had already taken, and ponderous manuscripts lay piled about the room. Dead works, alas! they have never been looked at since. That night some friends called, freshmen like himself; they begged him to go to the theatre; he refused, hesi-

tated, and at last went—and for three years from that time he never opened a book. Night after night saw him at the haunts of vice; the death-bound, body and soul, his bosom friends. Soon there was nothing wicked enough to scare him, no orgy too abominable, and scarce a blasphemy foul enough to make him smile; so blasé had he become in the paths of sin. Such was his state! and then a warning came—a fearful thing thundered from an angry God—I cannot tell you what its nature was; sufficient that it smote him trembling on his knees, and wrung from his heart an agony of prayer for mercy upon him, a sinner. This was his sight of life! How, with a broken constitution and brain stupified by false excitement, he set to work; how, spiritless, but persevering, he fagged on until he obtained a fair position in the scientific world—you my friends, would not care to hear. My object in relating another's fall, is that when one of you is tempted to his first stray step, the memory of my words to-night may whisper —take care,—take care.

"Gentlemen! you enter to-day upon a large field of labour. Young imaginations are wanted to give theories to old brains to reason out and work into fact.

"In physiology, the functions of the spleen, the suprarenal capsules, and the thymus gland, are still undiscovered. Organic chemistry has only advanced far enough to show us how ignorant we are.

"On our knowledge of chemistry and physiology, progress in pathology much depends; with the rapid strides of the two former sciences, the latter has kept pace.

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"Every year, the thinkers of Great Britain, America, France, and Germany add richly to the storehouse of proven fact. The invention of auscultation and percussion by Laennec and Avenbrugger has been as much an era in the history of medicine, in the present century, as Harvey's discovery of the circulation was in the past.

"Researches on the liver have made light much that was dark, and have given us a marvellous insight into diseases that it is vastly important to understand.

"Vigorous assaults of intellect have been made on the brain; they have met with but partial success; and the organ of thought, for the most part, still remains a gigantic riddle. Much, then, I say, has been done in the study of man; more remains to be done.

"We old men have contributed what we could; our labour is well nigh over, and we look to you, the youth of the profession, to carry on the work.

"Gird up your loins then, beginners! for the task before you; you have a great end in view to spur you on; the highest object of the Christian it is you seek,—the welfare of your fellow men."

The lecturer next turned his attention to those who had already been some time at the hospital. In addressing these he said: "There are some of you whom I scarcely know by sight; your names on the books are the only evidence that you are students here. You rarely visit the wards, or attend the operating or lecture theatres; you hate the profession and ignore its duties. Your curriculum finished, by

the aid of a 'crammer' you will 'pass' the College of Surgeons, receive diplomas testifying to your competence, and go forth in the world to heal the sick. What will be the consequence? If in your hearts exists a germ of right feeling, conscience will stab, and remorse cling to you during your whole lives. I cannot imagine anything more terrible than to feel incompetent when called upon to treat a patient whose life depends upon one's skill. Picture to yourselves a medical man called to a fit of apoplexy; he enters a room crowded with the pale faces of sobbing friends; prostrate in the midst of these he finds his patient senseless, the breathing stertorous, and face purple. The wife, bending in dreadful suspense over her stricken husband, heaves a deep sigh of relief as she sees the doctor; she makes way for him instantly, and approaching with inward trepidation, he stands looking at the unconscious man. What he ought to do he has not a notion; something is expected of him, he must not lose his reputation, an appearance of knowledge must be assumed. He orders the doomed man to bed, prescribes some trifling remedy, and leaves. Gentlemen, at the bar of Almighty God on the great day, this surgeon will stand accused of a fellow-creature's death. How, think you, will he answer to the charge? Will he deny that he has taken life? He has prevented the dying from regaining life; the two crimes are but one. Had he not pretended to a knowledge which he did not possess, his wretched patient would have received proper aid, instead of, unassisted, being left to die. Oh, when I think of the ignorance that some

of my professional brethren will have to answer for, I tremble for them. Do not, I pray, each of you, be one of these. You have ample time and opportunity to learn your duties; I urge you to neglect them not. Let the bedside be your crammer, learn the lessons that it teaches day by day. Book knowledge alone will avail you little, when suddenly called upon to avert death. The ear, the eye, the touch require training on flesh and blood, before they can be skilful in the diagnosis of disease. The habit of quick reasoning and sharp conclusion must be cultivated; the resolution made, that instant you must act upon it. Your hand must never falter, nor your courage fail; your presence of mind must never desert you; and for every malady you must be able to do the best thing at the shortest notice. These are acquirements not to be gained from books, you must have diagnosed and treated under the supervision of your teachers, to do the same when in practice left to yourselves.

"I have noticed some among my pupils who, if I may say so, seem over nice; who, in dandified dress, tread gingerly amongst the sick, and turn their heads from any bad-looking sore. Take my advice, you fastidious young gentlemen, and cultivate a love of science; armed with this you may look upon any wound without disgust. The lacerated limb which nauseates you fills the pathologist with delight; he watches with admiration the reparative process by which nature mends the broken surface; he sees crude exudation change into cell life, observes these cells congregate in pyramids, and form new flesh to fill

the breach, and he marks lastly the formation of new skin, covering and protecting the sensitive part beneath. Instead of turning up your noses, study the beautiful process of granulation, and you will derive gratification and instruction even from a nasty sore.

"To the investigation of the body, I advise each student to unite the study of the mind. Learn character, remember the weaknesses common to all, and, discerning the special foibles and follies of the individual, estimate their bearing on the malady complained of. None but those who have had a large experience of disease can form an idea how greatly matter is dependent upon mind. To the uninitiated in these subjects it might sound strange that mental distress should deprive a lady of the use of her legs; that anxiety about an examination should turn a student's skin yellow; that the sight of a child being run over should afflict a young woman with an ambition to walk with one foot in her hand, or to put her bread-and-butter into the back of her head, or to catch hold of her heels and spin round like a teetotum; that seeing a robber in the house should subject a gentleman for the rest of his life to tumbling down senseless with foam at the mouth. Yet these are realities and no fictions; everyone knows that low spirits will produce indigestion, and the above cases are but extensions of like cause and effect. But, setting aside these, the more exaggerated influence of the *mens insana*, mind and body are always so closely allied, that a morbid state of one will prevent recovery from disease of the other. It is well, then, to study

your patient psychologically as well as medically; learn, if you can, his peculiarities of temper, habits and predilections; probe delicately for the secret grief, the hidden fear, or the pent-up passion; and calm, console, or encourage, as your judgment may direct. No one has so many confidences entrusted to him as the medical man. Before him the cloak of conventionality is thrown aside, and ladies and gentlemen appear undisguised. The doctor sees through all, and understands society's shams. The elderly would-be damsel fears him, for he undermines her rouge; by him she has been seen wigless and toothless, tossing on the bed of pain; she fears him because, if he liked, he could expose her to the world; she loves him at the same time, because he keeps her secret; and she confides in him because he knows her as she is, has seen her withered old body unadorned, and instead of betraying amazement or surprise at the transition, has proved a kind and sympathising friend. The noble earl, the great politician, the far-famed author, throw away dignity before the doctor. He, they are well aware, knows them as poor, weakly human beings, by no means superior to the failings of mankind. The nobleman cannot be haughty to one who lately saw him swathed in flannel and agonized with gout; the diplomatist cannot be reserved with the man who beheld him almost crying with a carious tooth; and the popular writer would drop the heroics before one who knows him to be only a dyspeptic hypochondriac. Few try to keep up appearances before the doctor; it is impossible to do so, he sees everybody at his worst,

in his mental affliction and in his bodily torment; he sees him when 'all is vanity' is marked upon his brow. With free access to the boudoir, the study and business sanctum, penetrating bedrooms, kitchens, and nurseries at all hours, the doctor soon knows a household's secrets and its master's heart. Let him beware how he abuses the trust reposed in him. It is difficult to think of anything more revolting than a breach of confidence on the part of a medical man; happily such a thing is most rare, and well for the character of our profession that it is so. Mean and contemptible must he indeed be, who, for a love of gossip and detraction, would betray the confessions of his patients, or tattle of their domestic cares. . . . . Endeavour to take interest in all your cases, however trivial or commonplace the complaint may be. A cold in the head is of no mean importance in the eyes of him who has to bear it, and the doctor is expected to show sympathy for the same.

"When you are consulted by a patient and can detect nothing amiss, do not pooh-pooh and send him away, but listen gravely to his wailings, and hear all he has to say. He may be a fanciful fool, but you would do no good by telling him so; whilst, by a little tact and humouring, you may induce him to try change of scene and occupation, and so his imaginary ailments may pass away." After giving his hearers other hints of a similar character, the lecturer entered minutely on the best course of study to pursue, and the subjects most likely to repay investigation; in conclusion he said—

"There are many disagreeables which you will

have to bear, and many unpleasant duties which it will be your duty to perform; but the bitter is largely mingled with the sweet. Act, as kindly and Christian men, an honest part; and the prayers of the wife that you have kept from widowhood, of the mother whose little one you have saved from death, of the sorrowful, through you happy, of the comfortless, through you comforted, of the unclean, through you clean, shall wing their way unto the throne of God, and bring down untold blessings on your heads."

"A pity old Parchment does not put up for his county; not a mob in England could resist such Ciceronian eloquence," sneered Stevens.

"I should think that he must be a sincerely good man, and worthy of everyone's respect," observed Edith, glancing secretly at Stevens with a look of intense dislike.

"You are right, Miss Travers," said Stanley; "young men are apt to ridicule anything super-excellent, and so we laugh at him, and call him nick-names. Though a little eccentric, he is one of the best of men, and highly esteemed by all who know him."

Mr. Travers made no comments on the speech; but Edith fancied, from the expression of his face, that he approved.

Willie also said nothing, but he had listened with fervour to every word; and his brain was now engaged in calculating how long he would take in setting the world's mind at rest on the subject of the spleen, thymus gland, and suprarenal capsules. The warning to new-comers he did not at all think applied to his case, as he had not the least intention of giving

way to temptation; the trivialities of even innocent pleasures were not for him; his path lay in one narrow groove, from which he was to emerge some day and astound the universe.

The prizes were now distributed, with much clapping of hands and boisterous cheers; and then the evening's entertainment came to a close. Stanley and his friend went off to "make a night of it" with some congenial souls, and Mr. Travers and party hurried away to catch the train for Crofton.

CHAPTER III.

DESCRIPTIVE OF THE INNER LIFE OF A LONDON HOSPITAL: VISITING THE WARDS; DISSECTING, AND "CAPITAL" OPERATIONS; ALSO OF A DRUNKEN SCENE, AND CONVERSATION THEREON.

WILLIE has been a week at hospital; Crofton being at an inconvenient distance, he has taken lodgings in St. John's Street; and now, at eight a.m., is seated at a table littered with books, papers, and human bones. The bone of the temples is in his hand, and a volume lies open before his eyes; he is glancing from book to bone, and from bone to book, with an expression of extreme despair. The book says, "On the inferior surface of the petrous portion, there are eleven things to be noticed from before backwards." A list of names in many syllables follows in small print. Willie refers to the part of the bone indicated, and perceives a surface like the side of a horse's tooth, and apparently about as entertaining. "Eleven points of interest to be made out here!" he muses; "the fellow might as well give me the handle of a nail-brush, and tell me to find eleven points of interest in that. Heigho! if these are the rudiments of the 'basis of all medical and surgical knowledge,' as the lecturer styled anatomy the other day, what must the more advanced

parts be! If it is the foundation, I suppose it must be mastered somehow, or the superstructure will stand a bad chance;" and with a weary sigh he plunged again *in medias res*, and remained watching wonderfully small things to wonderfully big names, until the entrance of the servant with his breakfast admonished him to fall to upon a mutton chop, and get off to the hospital as quickly as possible, to be in time to accompany Dixon, the great surgeon, in his visit to the wards.

By daring bolts that a gourmand would have trembled to behold, he accomplished his meal and sallied forth to St. John's. He entered at the great gate, crossed the court, and joined a knot of students congregated near the surgery, and evidently awaiting some one.

"He is not come, then; I feared I was late," said Willie.

"So you ought to be," returned the person addressed; "but Dixon has long arrived at the murderer's last and most desperate crime, which De Quincey, you know, says is impunctuality."

At this moment the great man made his appearance. Willie and his companions hurried off to meet him, and were soon following him up the grand stone staircase to the wards. They entered a vast dormitory, along whose whitewashed walls clean little beds, exactly alike, were arranged in regular sequence. On some of these their occupants were sitting up and dressed; others—but very few—were empty; whilst most enclosed between their coarse sheets poor, suffering men prostrate in pain. The surgeon and pupils

advanced to the first bed, to which a wild-looking man was securely strapped down. He was a would-be suicide, had cut his throat terribly with a razor, and was only anxious to be free to repeat the gash. "Here we are again!" he exclaimed derisively; "butcher man with his butcher boys! Who are you going to kill this morning? Not me, curse you! I wish you were. I want to die, therefore you will cure me; others want to live, and them you'll kill. Dixon! I know you, old blackguard! if you get me well, I'll come to your house and murder you; my solemn oath, I will!" Mr. Dixon, without appearing to notice what was said, turned to the nurse and asked: "Has he been very violent since I saw him last?" "Well, sir," answered the nurse, taking off the dressings from the throat, and speaking in a loud cheerful voice, as though her patient were a mile off instead of under her nose; "he was a bit cantankerous in the night—so the nurse who sat up tells me—but he slept well after his draught, and has been quiet all the morning until now. It's seeing you, sir, and the gentlemen, that's set him on again." Here the man burst out—"Undo this strap, you she wolf! I will die! why should you save me when I hate to live? Let me go! let me go! you villains! I am free! I am an Englishman! my body is my own! you cannot, dare not keep me!" In his passion he had raised his voice almost to a shriek; so Mr. Dixon, seeing that his presence aggravated him, gave a few rapid instructions, and passed on to another bed. Horrified was poor Willie at the things he saw, as accident after accident was reviewed and passed; but he kept his

feelings to himself, and choked them down, fearing lest his companions should think him soft. He could keep his countenance now, having had some days' experience; but at first he was so sadly tried, as to be obliged to run away from what he could not bear to see, and get into the open air. Presently Mr. Dixon arrived at a patient who had wounded his foot by stepping on a rusty nail. An unimportant accident, one would think; not a thing that students would elbow one another in their eagerness to see; and yet they did so, each anxiously pressing forward to obtain the best view. The best view of what? Not of a slight wound, but of its result! of a living being, resting only on the back of his head and heels, the remainder of his body bent upwards like a tightly strung bow, rigid and motionless as in death. Every muscle was stretched to its utmost, some so strongly as to be partly torn across. The face, contorted with agony, showed that the mind had not departed, but that the feelings were as sensitive as in health. The man bore the most excruciating pain that nature has ever inflicted, or human ingenuity contrived; he was enduring tetanus. Willie involuntarily turned away; the sight was too much for him; he needed schooling yet, to contemplate unmoved such suffering as this. There was little to be done for the poor creature; he was doomed. Mr. Dixon prescribed as he thought best, and passed gravely on. In the women's ward he stopped at the bed of a very beautiful child. She was sitting up supported by pillows, and playing with her doll, rocking it on her bosom tenderly to and fro as though she fancied that it was being hushed to

sleep. Startled by her visitors, she looked a little fearful until Mr. Dixon, patting her cheek, said kindly, "Don't be afraid, Allie; we are not going to touch the leg," and then she brightened again, and looked up trustingly in his face, quite reassured.

"We are come, Allie," he continued, sitting down by her side, "to see if you will be ready to be sent to sleep like Dollie, at one o'clock to-day; I told you about it, you know, dear, the last time I was here."

"You won't hurt Allie, will you, sir," asked the child pleadingly.

"You silly little thing! How can I hurt you when you are fast asleep? I said, you remember, that when you awoke afterwards you would feel more pain than you do now; but this will be only for a short time, and then little Allie will have a nice strong leg again, and be able to play with her brothers and sisters, as she used to do."

The child's eyes beamed at this delightful prospect; and Mr. Dixon left her happily waiting an operation by which a mass of diseased bone was to be excised.

There was another operation case in the ward; a thin, careworn woman, afflicted with a tumour of immense size which she had borne for years. "How are you to-day? strong enough to bear your coming trial?" asked the surgeon cheerfully.

"Yes, sir, I hope so," she replied, speaking rather tremulously. "God has given me wonderful support up to this time; and though I am a little nervous now, I don't think I shall fear when the time comes. God will not fail me; He will help me to bear it."

"You have fully made up your mind, then, not to take chloroform?"

"Yes, sir; I could not take it after your saying there was risk; it would not be right to hazard a life which belongs to God, for the sake of saving myself a short time of pain. The thought of Jesus will bring me through, sir; my suffering will not be greater than His was, and His patience will be my comfort."

"God bless you! my good woman," said Dr. Dixon as he moved on, touched by her pious resolution. Willie followed, looking steadfastly on the ground in order to hide the tears that filled his eyes.

The remainder of the sick under his charge visited, Mr. Dixon left to see his private patients; and Willie turned his steps to the dissecting room, to employ himself until one o'clock, a time that he had been looking forward to with secret dread, for he was then to experience the horrors of the operating theatre for the first time. He now passed through a dark passage, pushed open a swinging door, and entered the room he sought. Long, narrow tables lined the chamber on either side, and upon these lay the naked dead. Students, covered to the chin with aprons of red leather, bent in crowds over the corpses, busily at work; whilst a perpetual buzz of laughing, talking, sawing, snipping, and sharpening knives was more suggestive of light-hearted mechanics fashioning tables and chairs than of anatomists investigating the structure of their fellow-men.

"How beautifully you are getting on with that arm Wilson!" said Willie, addressing a youth who was bending in deep interest over his work, and who was

no other than Stanley's successful rival in the past year.

"Yes, it looks nice, does it not? I can't bear to see a part hacked about hastily; it seems such waste."

Willie thought of a ragged piece of workmanship in the corner that belonged to him, and tried not to blush.

"I love this work," said Wilson enthusiastically. "Books give you knowledge secondhand, cut and dried by some other man; here you get information fresh from the fountain-head. Is it not delightful to see a shrunken, withered limb—such as this was—grow under one's scalpel into the picture you behold it now?"

His work, even to an unprofessional eye, was indeed beautiful. Red symmetrical muscles were streaked by glistening, cord-like nerves. The arteries, injected with red wax, ramified again and again from the parent stem; and the blue veins, branching by their side, made a pretty contrast; there was nothing here to disgust a sensible man, and much to please him. But alas! decay is quick, and dissection a work of time; in a few days more the same sight will have become revolting; then an observer, to find pleasure in it, must understand what he sees.

"Did not dissecting make you feel sick when you first began?" asked Willie, feeling that in himself at present nausea was more strongly developed than interest.

"Not the least," replied the other;" I tried to see things philosophically, and I succeeded. Looking at a dead body, I thought—here is matter that was once

a man—here is a piece of machinery that is worn out and no longer serviceable; I am going to take it to pieces, and learn how it worked."

"But you must have felt a little nervous," urged Willie.

"I did not, I assure you. I never was frightened at the dead but once, and that was at the end of last winter session. I was going up for the examination at the College of Surgeons; and as, for the hospital prize, I had been obliged to work at other things than anatomy, I was pressed for time on this particular subject. One of the surgeons, knowing my predicament, obtained leave for me to dissect after hours; I was entrusted with the key of this room, and allowed to come here in the evening, and stay as late as I pleased. It was a dark night as I crossed the deserted court, felt my way up the passage, and unlocked that door yonder. A candle and matches had been placed for me on the first table, and, having found these, I procured a light. The work that I had to accomplish was the dissection of a head and neck; and I now arranged its position and commenced my labours. I had not worked long before the stillness of the place began to oppress me, and I could not help every now and then glancing hastily round. Each time that I looked down a dreadful fancy seized me that something in the room was stealthily approaching, and I was compelled to raise my eyes to ascertain that it was not so. Presently the face on which I was operating acquired horror; it seemed, by its look, to reproach me with desecrating the image of God. Ridiculous! I tried to think, giving myself a

mental shake, by mutilating the dead, I benefit the living. What can it matter to a corpse, if it be buried whole or piecemeal? In either case it soon becomes but grains of dust. I seek the good of others, and I do no wrong. At that moment a rat pattered across the floor; I knew what horrible meal it had been frightened from, and the thought turned me cold and sick. With a resolute effort I worked on; but soon the same sensation of something moving towards me caused me again involuntarily to gaze around. The aspect of the room had grown, to my imagination, full of fear; the candle, which for convenience I had placed on the chest of my subject, lighted but a small part of the rest of the vast chamber, the rest appearing either in shadowy outline, or hidden in total darkness. I became so nervous, that I took the light and made a tour of inspection. Near the door, a fearful sight met my eyes. A venerable man with white curling hair,—the heads of the subjects you know are always shaved—was sitting, or half reclining, on one of the tables. One eye was open and the other closed, as though blind; but the striking part of his face was, that he had no forehead; the top of his head seemed flat, and his hair almost on a level with his eyes. The rest of the body was covered with a white sheet, as the subjects usually are in the absence of the dissectors. My brain, previously excited, grew dizzy at the awful appearance. My knees trembled; the candle shook in my fingers, and with a crash, dropped on the floor. . . . . .
'Hilloa, sir! Dropped your light! I thought I heard it. Why, bless me, sir, how pale you look!'

It was Simpkins, the porter. Knowing that I was here, he had looked in before going home, to see if anything was wanted. The mystery was soon explained. It was a subject propped up by wooden bolsters for the convenient dissection of the head; the cranium had been sawn across, the brain removed, and the lower part of the scull stuffed up with tow and cotton wool, which, hanging over, had looked like hair: the absence of the top of the scull had of course caused the singular flatness; the blind eye was one naturally closed in death, the open one was its fellow partially dissected. There is the confession of my nervous folly, Travers; keep it, like a good fellow, to yourself."

"I should have thought that Simpkins would have told every student, and you would never have heard the last of your adventure," said Willie.

"I gave Simpkins five shillings," replied Wilson, simply. Thinking that he ought not to lose such an opportunity of gaining knowledge as now presented itself, Willie begged his companion to demonstrate on the arm before him; and Wilson readily assenting, both were soon deep in the origin and insertion of the muscles, and the distribution of the nerves and arteries, that Wilson's dissection had exposed to view.

They had not been long at their occupation before the door opened, and in walked, or rather rolled, Stevens. His great coat, partly open, showed him to be in full evening dress; his choker was twisted awry, his shirt front rumpled, his hair dishevelled, and himself drunk. Happily for him, the demonstrator was not in the room; so he reeled unmolested

to the fire-place, round which some students were gathered chatting.

"Well, you fellars!" he said indistinctly. "Been to a hop, yer see, an' trifle lush after, 'nother place. Rather late, eh? Shan' go bed—bedsh rediculoush!"

The poor wretch appeared as if his last night in bed were not far off, judging by his hollow cheeks, and bloodshot eyes. One or two of the young men at the fire looked shocked and moved away; but the rest seemed to think his appearance a capital joke.

"Let's see you walk across the room on one plank, without touching the others," said a round-faced little man.

"Half a sovereign, he can't!" cried a Jewish-looking fellow with a glass in his eye.

"I book bet," stammered Stevens, taking out his pocket-book, and trying to write.

"Unfair!" interrupted the little man; he is imposing on you, Stevens. I will bet you the same, you don't get half way."

"Take you too; like to see the fellar can do me. He 'pose on me, indeed! Ha! ha!" and the poor creature planted his foot on the plank agreed upon, and essayed to walk. One tottering step, and a clumsy stride, and he swayed rapidly to the right, barely in time to catch a table, and save himself from falling.

"A decided case of lost! and to both of us. Come, pay up, old fellow!" shouted the little man, leading Stevens to a seat.

"Confounded floor—not straight. Try 'gain. Bet double—quits," said the tipsy youth.

"No, that is enough," interposed a tall student

who seemed to have some authority with the rest. "Get the poor brute away," he added aside, "or the demonstrator will be down upon him in a twinkling, and we shall have a precious row."

By a mixture of force and persuasion, Stevens was led out, cursing, offering to fight, and lastly crying. Those who had won his money volunteered to take him home, which feat they accomplished after severe bodily exertion, and a stoppage at every public house that chanced to be in the way. Willie's face expressed mingled feelings of pity and disgust. "Is he often like that?" he asked his companion.

"Often! almost always. He is only one-and-twenty, and has nearly killed himself already."

"What an object he looked in his dress clothes, and crumpled linen!" exclaimed Willie. "I wonder he dared to come in here; and how the fellows despised him! They seemed to look upon him as a naughty child who rather amused them. It was too bad to win his money whilst he was in that state; I call it downright swindling."

"It was wicked to treat him as they did, at all," replied Wilson. "They knew that he was hurrying to the grave through drink, and yet they laughed at and made fun of him as though they knew nothing of the kind. To-morrow they will meet the poor fellow, and playfully allude to the scene of to-day, leaving an impression on his mind that he has done rather a fine thing than otherwise. Medical students are apt to regard drunkenness as a very venial sin; and although most of them are hard-reading, temperate fellows, yet every hospital has its fast men, and

is rarely without its drunkard, sometimes being honoured by two or three."

"There are none at this hospital so bad as Stevens, I should hope?" said Willie.

"I don't know that," replied Wilson; "he shows it most, certainly, because he always takes care to let people know when he is drunk; but there is a man of my year named Stanley, who is not much better, only he tries to hide the fact. You have not seen him, he added, seeing that Willie was opening his eyes wide with astonishment; he has not been to the hospital since the night of the address, and very likely it will be some time before he makes his appearance, as he often stays away for weeks."

"Stanley! that nice-looking fellow, the winner of the second prize, a drunkard!" thought Willie; "it is impossible, there must be some mistake; there are two of the same name, probably."

"What sort of man is he in appearance?" he asked.

The description exactly tallied with the person he knew. Stanley the handsome prizeman and Stanley the drunkard were identical!

"He has great abilities," said Wilson, "and a wonderful knack of cramming; and, being very proud, he hates to be beaten in anything; so he knocked off drink a few weeks before exam., and read I don't know how many hours a day; that was how he came out so high: it was certainly a great achievement to beat men who had been working all the year. But I have wasted enough time, and must get on with my dissection." So saying, Wilson returned vigo-

rously to scalpel and forceps; and Willie, going to his place, remained vaguely cutting something, until the time for operations. . . . . .

The operating theatre was a circular room lighted from above, and contained benches of a similar shape, rising in tiers one above the other. In the centre of these stood a thick wooden table, and at some height above this, and reflecting it, a huge mirror was fixed, for the convenience of lookers on in the back-ground, who, not being able to see the table directly, looked in the glass and beheld it there. Round the table stood the surgeons, their assistants, and the instrument-maker with his case of knives. On the benches were laughing, chattering students, wedged one among the others like penned sheep.

Willie had secured a good place in the front; he was silent and uncomfortable, and wondered to hear his companions so gaily talking. "They must be wholly devoid of feeling," he thought, "to laugh at such a time as this." He did not know that their seeming carelessness of another's pain was but assumed, partly for the sake of appearing experienced, and partly because pity is a sensation that the surgeon must resist, or in operating he would soon be unnerved. Those who show most pity are the accomplished surgeons; they have thoroughly subjected the sentiment to their will, and can afford occasionally to indulge their feelings; a student cannot so easily control his sympathies, he knows his weakness, and to avoid it, rushes into the opposite extreme.

There was a sudden cessation of noise as two hospital porters entered, bearing on a stretcher a young

man, the patient for operation number one. He had nothing on but his night-shirt and a flannel wrapper; his right leg was bandaged, and was to be amputated. He looked pale, but resolute, when laid on the table; and, glancing round the room, he perceived the student who had dressed his limb, and gave him a smile of recognition. Presently the house surgeon, pouring a colourless fluid from a bottle into a contrivance that looked like a respirator, placed the latter over the sick man's mouth and nose, and commenced the administration of chloroform. It seemed to cause inconvenience at first, slight gaspings occurring, and then the sufferer breathed regularly, and apparently without discomfort. Soon he began to wander, talking as he thought to his wife. "I can't go to work to-day, Polly, my leg is too bad. Polly, I am afraid I shall never work again; what will become of the children I don't know, they'll all have to go into the great house."

Then, his mind fixing upon late events, he said, coaxingly, "Polly! promise me not to grieve if I tell you something, something that must happen and will try us both. It is, dear, that the doctor says my leg—we must be brave, Polly, we must indeed—he says my leg is to be taken off."

"Ready?" asked the surgeon, pinching the skin of his patient to make sure of the absence of sensation.

"Quite," returned the giver of chloroform, touching the eyeball of the unconscious man, and finding that he did not flinch.

Quick as thought the glittering knife and saw

performed their office, the spouting arteries were controlled without an instant's delay, and the patient was back in his bed again before he fully realized what had occurred. Willie felt a little faint, and had he been near the door would have gone out; but being unable to move he kept his place.

Number two was carried in—the poor woman with the tumour.

"We will be as quick as we can, so you must try to keep quiet," said Mr. Dixon soothingly.

She looked at him a moment gratefully, but did not speak; and then her fixed, earnest gaze upwards, showed that her soul was turned to heaven.

It was a fearful operation; the tumour was so immense that excising it seemed like cutting off half her body; but though she had nothing to lull the pain, and each sweep of the knife caused the acutest agony, she bore all without the slightest struggle or a single groan. God, when he punished woman by the great pain and peril of childbirth, seems to have given her as compensation, a greater capacity for bearing pain than he has bestowed on man. A trifling smart will often draw more cries from the strong man than the greatest anguish will elicit from the patient woman. How much more can she not bear when strengthened by a fervent faith!

Number two was borne out, and number three took her place. Willie, without looking, knew instinctively that it was the pretty child. The poor little thing was terrified as she saw rows of strange faces looking down upon her: she clung to the nurse sobbing, and begged to be taken back to bed. The nurse

tried in vain to soothe her, but the child was too frightened to be comforted. Mr. Dixon came near and whispered, "Allie! don't you know me; I am the kind gentleman"—for so she always called him. She looked up at him, and sobbed out, "You won't let those big, nasty men hurt Allie, will you, sir?"

"I will take take care of you," he answered tenderly; "you may trust me, they shall not hurt you."

"She did trust him, for she smiled through her tears and thanked him.

"Allie will go to sleep now," she said, as if desirous of atoning for having been troublesome.

"I knew my little girl would be good," said Mr. Dixon. "This gentleman will give you something to smell, and you will soon be fast asleep."

The house surgeon placed the inhaler over her mouth; and the child, conquering her repugnance to the vapour for fear of causing displeasure, was soon insensible.

Mr. Dixon, the kind-hearted man, was now only Mr. Dixon the surgeon: his fingers, holding the cruel knife like a pen, seemed carved in stone, they were so motionless. Coolly and critically he surveyed the limb, nicely judged where to make his incision, and began. There was a fall and confusion among the benches: somebody had fainted. It was Willie.

CHAPTER IV.

MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF A GOOD MAN, AND FOLLOWS HIM IN AN ADVENTURE AMONGST THE LONDON SLUMS.

A MAN was sitting in an ill-furnished bedroom, at the very top of a tall house in the —— Road: his face was buried in his hands, and he seemed in sorrow. "My God! my God!" he cried, raising his tearful eyes to heaven, and in his fervour, clasping his hands so tightly, that the fingers grew white and bloodless. "Have pity! have pity upon thy miserable children!"

For some minutes he remained engrossed in silent prayer; then rising suddenly, he began to pace the room with rapid steps, speaking to himself as he walked.

"Starving—they drop down in the gutters, dead! Sick—with none to heal them, they crawl like dogs away to die. Drunkards—they drink that which poisons them! Filthy—they breed disease that kills them! Criminal—they work their way to prison and the gibbet! Oh, London poor! would to God that I could save you from eternal death! Alas, how little can I do single-handed! How little can the whole band of those who work for good in this city, do! The harvest is too great, and

the labourers too few. People cannot know the misery of London, or they would not look coldly on our efforts. Could they but be told and made to believe a fraction of the dreadful truth, with one impulse they would rush to their poor brothers' aid. Look at the Lancashire distress; there was little need to beg for relief then. Look at the cases of destitution made known in police reports; they are inundated by the charities of the tender-hearted. No; there are, I think, few of my countrymen who can see want without alleviating it; it must be ignorance that prevents their helping the wretched creatures in this city. And yet, by some who do know the state of things, much has been done. Ragged schools, refuges, magdalens, have paid with interest the gold that instituted them, by saving many an outcast; but we want more workmen in the field, to penetrate the dens of vice, and show their occupants the light of God. Could I but have under my command a thousand of Christ's soldiers, I might effect something: alone I can do nothing, or God knows how little."

He opened the window and looked out upon the street. A gin palace was opposite, and persons came constantly in and out. A woman selling fried fish had planted herself at the entrance, and near her lounged some evil-looking fellows in greasy corduroys. Presently the door opened and a stout woman appeared, leading an old man in a ragged coat and battered hat, helplessly intoxicated.

"The plague of London in the nineteenth century —gin!" murmured he at the window. "Poor old man! you are stricken and have not long to live! oh

that I could avert your fearful doom!" At that moment there was a tap at the bedroom door; and without waiting the usual invitation of "Come in," Mr. Travers entered, shook the inmate of the room cordially by the hand, and looking anxiously into his face said, "You are not well to-day, Ernest; you have been doing too much again."

"No, Richard. I have not been out this evening; I have been thinking, perhaps, more than is good for me."

"You must not do it, my dear friend; you must not, indeed. Too much thinking for you is the worst form of all work; you are brooding constantly over evils that you cannot remedy, and wearing yourself out with other men's sorrows."

"I cannot help it," replied Ernest; "you have not seen what I have, or you would not wonder that I take things to heart so deeply."

"To do as you have done is not expected of any man," said Mr. Travers: "to give up your profession as a barrister, comfortable rooms, friends and fortune, to sink into a miserable garret like this, to allow yourself a sum that will buy you little more than bread and water daily, and to devote your whole time and money to the cause of the poor,—is, I say, a sacrifice which God cannot require of you."

"I have never ceased to thank God that I took this step," replied Ernest. "Before, every case of starvation that I read in the papers, every drunkard who reeled past me, every outcast woman whom I saw, drew from my conscience the stinging rebuke:—You are idly looking on at all this misery, and do nothing

to help. I began to go about trying to do good; and then for the first time I learnt what want means. Woe unutterable stared me daily in the face; I saw things so appalling that if a novelist could have imagined he would not have dared to describe, lest he should be charged with painting life as it could not be. I could not rest, until before God I had resolved to devote myself, my time, my money, from that time to death, wholly to the aid of the suffering poor."

"Your place will be high in heaven," said Mr. Travers involuntarily.

"No," answered Ernest, sadly. "I began too late collecting jewels for my heavenly crown; still I trust that I shall save a few souls before I die."

"You have yet five and thirty years before you, if you reach the allotted threescore and ten."

"Ah! I wish that were to be the number of my days; what might I not accomplish in five and thirty years! But it cannot be, Richard, I feel it cannot be."

"If you persist in overtaxing your strength, you certainly will not reach old age; but if you wisely limit your labours and study health, you have as good a chance of living long as any other man."

"Jesus did not spare his body; he endured such fatigue and privation as must have injured health."

"If you—like him—were to be martyred at the end of three years, and knew that nothing could hurt you until then, I would say work if you are able night and day; but since you are an ordinary mortal, with no pre-knowledge of events, and have probably the general term of life allotted to you, with talents to employ during that time, I judge that it is wicked to

be careless of health; and you are careless of it when thinking wholly of the good of others, you forget yourself."

"I am sorry," said Ernest humbly. "I see you are right, and for the future I will be more careful of myself. My whole heart is so in the work that it is difficult to think of anything else; but I will try."

Here a heavy step on the stairs and a knock at the door announced a visitor.

"Come in!" said Ernest, and a policeman entered. "Ah! good evening, Jackson; what have you got for me to-night?" asked Ernest.

"Well, sir, there's a reg'lar case of distress a mate of mine told me of down Blackhorse-fields; it ain't in my beat, and I'm on duty, or I'd come with you, for it's a ticklish place for a gentleman to venture into; though for the matter of that, I think they know you, sir, pretty well in most such parts, and them that does know you wouldn't hurt a hair of your head; still, I'd be careful and look out for one of themselves that you're acquainted with before you ventures into the court, or you might get an ugly tap without seeing who gave it."

"I shall be safe enough," replied Ernest, smiling. "What is the case, and how am I to find it?"

"It's a young gal that's dying, simply, my mate says, from want of vittles. You know Mother B.'s lodgings? Well, it ain't in her court, but it's the next one to it; third door on the right, and the room at the top of the house. I must wish you good night now, gentlemen, for I'm pressed for time;" and with a respectful bow the policeman quitted the room.

"I give this man and some others," said Ernest, a

small present of money to tell me of any urgent cases of distress that come under their notice; I have also a few similar agents whom I can trust amongst the very poor. In this way I get to know of a great deal of secret misery which I could not have found out for myself."

"I should like to come with you to-night, if you have no objection," said Mr. Travers.

"I think you had better not; it is an infamous quarter, as the policeman said, and the bad characters in it don't like strangers. Certainly, there is not the danger in these places that there used to be; but you may get your hat knocked over your eyes, or some disagreeable of that sort, even if nothing worse happens."

"I will risk that," said Mr. Travers gaily. "Come, Ernest, let us be off at once, or I shall never get home; it is past nine already."

Seeing that his friend had made up his mind, Ernest made no further objection, and the pair sallied forth arm-in-arm.

Five or six minutes of walking brought them to an alley, about a foot or so of which was visible at the entrance, and the rest wholly obscured in darkness.

Earnest entered, feeling his way by the wall, and Mr. Travers followed.

As they emerged into the lighter court indicated as the whereabouts of Mother B., a gruff voice saluted them with, "Who the devil are you?" and the dim light revealed a short, thick-set man with closely cropped hair, red neckerchief, and thick lace-up boots, confronting them in a hostile attitude.

"You ought to remember me, Brown Jim," said Ernest quietly.

The man came nearer, and after looking for a moment scrutinizingly into Ernest's face, said with a smile of recognition, "Beg your pardon, sir, I'm sure; couldn't be expected to know who you was in this light."

"How is your daughter?" asked Ernest.

"Well, I thank you, sir, she's pretty middling just at present. I was up at the hospital to see her this afternoon, and found her doing very nicely, and seemed to want for nothing. The tears was streaming down her face as she spoke of your goodness to her, sir, when she was in that cursed hole; I'm too wicked a man to say 'God bless you,' or I'd say it with a will."

"Come to my house to-morrow morning, Jim, and we will have a talk about yourself," said Ernest, anxious not to lose a chance of doing good.

The man promised that he would do so; and Ernest, telling him on what errand they had come, asked to be directed to the house they sought.

"Certainly, sir," replied the man quickly, "I know the gal well; she used to lodge at Mother B.'s, and one night she went off, and we never catched sight of her again till yestermorning; when she come dragging herself along like, and plumped down in the middle of the court in a dead faint. There was a room empty just then at the top of Tom Hacker's place in the next court; so we carried her up and made her as comfortable as we could; but she can't eat nothing, and ain't scarcely spoke since, so I'm afeard she don't stand much chance of pulling through.

If you'll foller me, gentlemen, I'll take you up at once."

A small crowd of men and women had collected round them during this conversation, and they stared with unfeigned astonishment at Jim and his visitors.

"Come to see the sick gal," said Jim in explanation, as he led the way through the group. No interruption was offered; and Mr. Travers and Ernest, following their guide, passed through an archway into the other court, entered a house without knocking, mounted a narrow, ricketty staircase, and found themselves at the door of the poor girl's room. The man here left them, saying that he would wait about the house outside. Ernest knocked, and receiving no answer went softly in, followed by Mr. Travers. The room was very small; it had a sloping ceiling corresponding in shape with the roof of the house; the laths and plaster had been broken in one part so that the stars could be seen through the opening; there was no furniture of any sort; the window was merely a piece of cracked wood on hinges, kept closed by a pin; and the atmosphere was stifling and difficult to endure. On the ground was a rushlight stuck in the neck of a bottle, and in the corner near this on a bundle of straw, and covered by a piece of ragged carpet, lay the dying girl. She looked a woman of thirty, though they learnt afterwards that she was but nineteen. Her tangled masses of black hair contrasted fearfully with the ghastly face about which they hung; her cheeks were so hollow that they had the appearance of being sucked in by the breath, as children "make a face." Her breast, concealed by

an old cotton dress, was flat like a child's; the neck was visible, and its skin hung loosely as if too large for what it covered. She remained perfectly passive, seemingly insensible or indifferent to her visitors.

"Will you fetch a doctor?" Ernest asked, turning to Mr. Travers; "the man who brought us here will show you the way; you will find him below." He is a returned convict," he added in a whisper; "but you may thoroughly trust him; he is anxious to show his gratitude for a service that I once rendered his daughter, and will do anything to serve me. There is no time to be lost; even now I fear we are too late to do much good."

Mr. Travers, without speaking, hurried away, and Ernest and the dying were left alone.

He knelt down by the poor girl's side, and in a low sweet voice that trembled with earnestness, poured forth, from memory, the fifty-first Psalm.

Her expression changed as he began, and she seemed like one awakened out of sleep. When he had finished, with great effort she repeated the words, "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

"Amen," murmured Ernest; "Lord Jesus hear her prayer!" Her lips worked convulsively, as though she wished to speak, but was unable. Ernest bent down his head so as to catch the faintest whisper.

"Forgive—" she said almost inaudibly, "us our tres—." Here she paused, unable to proceed.

"Forgive us our trespasses," Ernest repeated, finishing the sentence, "as we forgive—" she went on, and again stopped, exhausted. For some minutes

she lay quiet, and then suddenly, as if inspired with new strength, she stretched out her arm, and laying a skeleton hand on Ernest's shoulder, gazed into his face and said in a low, distinct voice, "I forgive *him*." Her arm fell heavily on the straw. She was dead.

Ernest remained for some time on his knees in prayer. He was roused by loud and angry voices in the court below; one of the rows common to the quarter was brewing, and there would probably be a fight. He went quickly down the stairs, hoping to get through the rioters before the disturbance increased.

Two women, surrounded by a ring of their acquaintances of both sexes, were shouting at each other the vilest terms in the Billingsgate vocabulary; and it was evident that they would soon come to blows.

Ernest hesitated a moment on the door step, and then murmuring, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake happy are ye," pushed his way resolutely through the crowd, and going up to one of the combatants, said, "Don't fight; tell me your quarrel and I will try to settle it for you some other way."

A yell of blasphemy burst from her lips at this interruption, whilst a perfect volley of angry exclamation rose from those around.

"Who the —— is he?" "Where does he come from?" "Knock him on the head!" "Knife him!" "Give him a taste of your claws, Sue!"

"I'll tell you who he is," shouted a big fellow in the first rank; "he's the tract patterer, come to see little Loo. Didn't you see him in the other court?"

Ernest turned to the man who had spoken, and said in a loud, solemn voice that all could hear, "Little Loo has been praying to Almighty God; I have just left her. She is dead! Her last words were that she forgave *him*—the man who, in stealing her innocence, became her murderer. A sister, now a corpse in the midst of you, with her dying breath forgave her deadliest enemy. My friends, at such a time as this, you dare not bear hatred in your hearts!" He paused, and there was a deep silence. Presently, the tall man, who had before spoken, said gruffly, "You'd better stash it, Sue.

"Yes, stash it!" echoed several others.

"The cove ain't a bad sort," continued the burly peacemaker, "and he's about right; it ain't a time for using mauleys."

The woman called Sue picked up her bonnet, which had dropped on the ground, and walked sullenly away. The crowd made way respectfully for Ernest as he left the court; and, gaining the street, he met Mr. Travers, with the doctor and Brown Jim. "It is too late," he said sorrowfully; "she is dead."

CHAPTER V.

CONVERSATION ON HUMAN VANITIES. EXPERIENCES OF AN EMBRYO STUDENT AND A CYNIC'S VIEWS ON SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.

It is Saturday morning, and a fête day for Edith, for Willie comes home to stay until Monday. She has been into his bedroom, put his slippers by his bed, hung his dressing-gown over the easy chair, placed a picture that she had just drawn above the mantel-piece, and arranged some flowers in a vase upon his toilet table. Now she is looking out of the dining-room window, watching for his arrival.

"Breakfast time," said Mr. Travers, who was seated in an easy chair, reading the newspaper. "That young rascal ought to be here."

"Perhaps the train is late," suggested Edith, ever ready in her brother's defence.

"There he is," she cried, as Willie, with his carpet-bag slung over his umbrella, sprang up the door-steps at a bound, and sounded a vigorous rat-tat-tat with the lion-headed knocker. Edith rushed to the door, and received him with half-a-dozen kisses, before he was well in the house.

"I am glad to see you back, Willie," said Mr. Travers, shaking his nephew cordially by the hand; "this little girl of mine has missed you sadly."

"Dear me, uncle, one would think that I had been away years, instead of a little more than a week, by the sort of reception I am getting," said Willie, laughing. "Surely, Edith, you have not been such a goose as to fret," he added, kissing his sister, playfully.

"I could not help being a little dull, Willie; it is the first time that you have ever been away, and it made such a blank."

"Pleasant for me, that!" said Mr. Travers, putting on an injured air. "The being alone with your uncle, you call a blank!"

"You know I don't mean that, uncle," said Edith, coaxingly; "if you were to go away, and I were left alone with Willie, there would be a blank just the same.

"A very diminutive one, I expect," returned Mr. Travers, smiling. "But please give us our breakfast, for I am starving."

Edith led the way to the breakfast-room, and the three were soon seated round the table, doing justice to the eatables thereon.

"I must talk professionally to a doctor, I suppose, in order to make myself agreeable; so Willie, will you neutralize the pangs of hunger, by such an antidote as a devilled kidney."

"What a teaze you are, uncle!" said Edith. "I am sure doctors never talk in that manner."

"I don't know that," replied Mr. Travers: it is a great failing of medical men to interlard their conversation with professional matter, or in other words, to talk shop."

"They are not half so bad as lawyers," observed Willie.

"Perhaps not; lawyers sin abominably in this respect, but doctors are not innocent, though barristers may be guiltier. It is very trying to a doctor, in general company, to be obliged to potter on in conversation on general topics of which his companions know as much as he, when that same morning he has been laying down the law in a dozen or more families; every word that he has said having been treasured up as gold, and he himself regarded with a reverential awe. He is strongly tempted to assume the dictatorship again, to volunteer information upon materia medica, or startle his hearers by relating a few of the horrors of disease. Take care of this pitfall, Master Willie, or you will drop into it some day."

"A man must be awfully conceited to hate taking an inferior part in conversation," said Willie.

"Man is naturally vain, and likes to take the lead in everything," replied Mr. Travers. But even those who are shy of making themselves conspicuous by absorbing the conversation, yet like to talk upon subjects that they know best, because they are afraid of showing their ignorance. Every one seems to think that he ought to have been a Solomon, and is in constant dread lest others should find out that he is not one. What lies people tell, and what hypocrites they make of themselves, to hide a want of knowledge on even the most trivial subjects! After all, they generally fail in their object; for one who pretends to knowledge which he has not is uncommonly easy to see through. If these shammers could

only know how a man of learning understands their shallow artifices, and, piercing through the thin crust of false pretence, probes the real depth of their acquaintance with the subject of which they speak, they would be more inclined to ask questions and try to learn, than for the sake of preserving a false dignity, and keeping up a wretched semblance of mental equality with superior intellects—to condescend to equivocation and downright falsehood."

"It appears to me, that those who confess their ignorance and ask for information, are always respected for doing so," observed Edith.

"Certainly they are," replied Mr. Travers; "and surely it seems unreasonably absurd for a person to think highly of an acquaintance for owning what he does not know—to be aware that his truthfulness is esteemed by all, and yet himself to persist in a contemptible system of deceit, which, when he detects in others he must heartily despise."

"It seems childish to be afraid to ask for an explanation of what one does not understand," said Willie; "but it is not easy to do so. For instance, you quoted something from Horace, not long ago; I had not a notion of what it meant, and yet I nodded my head as if I understood all about it."

"I am afraid that I must plead guilty also," said Edith; "for when I was at tea at Mrs. Bird's the other evening, she asked us a riddle; of course nobody guessed it, and when she told the answer, every one laughed, and said it was capital. I could not see the point, and yet I laughed, and said it was capital too."

"Good illustrations, and candidly told," said Mr. Travers. "You must be both of you proud of your powers of mind, or you would have been brave enough on these occasions to own your deficiency."

"There's one for you, Edith, this time," said Willie, laughing; "you don't often get a hit."

"I shall manage to survive it," replied Edith, smiling affectionately at her uncle. "I like to be told my faults, in order to avoid them."

"The same sort of vanity peeps out in another way," observed Willie. "How it tries your humility to have a thing explained to you which you perfectly understand! Suppose that you are talking of some topic of the day, and happen to make a mistake, some slip of the tongue that makes your companion believe that you know nothing of the subject, he proceeds forthwith to enlighten you upon what you really know as well as he. It is no good remonstrating, because he won't cut short in a hurry the deliciousness of showing off his knowledge by informing you; it is not a bit of use interrupting with, 'Yes; I know, I am perfectly aware,' &c., for the fellow will only look upon you as a hypocrite, trying to appear to have known before what he has just told you. The other day I was talking to a student about the American war, and made some error in geography which led him to think that I knew nothing of the military positions of either Federals or Confederates, and he immediately began to explain. I could not say, 'I know all about it, and I don't want to hear,' for he would only have put me down as a conceited ass who would not be informed; so when he commenced 'Grant is here and Lee there,

and Sheridan here and Early there,' instead of singing out impatiently 'Yes! yes! I know!' I simply held my nose and took my medicine quietly, with as few grimaces as possible."

"And you did the best thing that could have been done under the circumstances," said Mr. Travers. "Men who try to show off their learning by boring others with explanations are almost as wearisome as the intellectual cheat."

"What on earth do you mean by that?"

"I mean that there are many whom the world sets down as clever fellows who have no right whatever to the title; they gain it by carrying about with them a compact little dish of knowledge collected casually or by their situation in life, and ready to be served out spoonful by spoonful to every acquaintance who will allow himself to be fed. The dishes vary in size according to the intellect of their proprietor, and are generally, I must say, capital eating whilst they last. But alas! when finished, you can get no more; his stock exhausted, the owner either escapes from your society, or ignominiously collapses into silence or commonplace. He is, however, liable to forget that you have swallowed and digested all he had to give, and serves out a second time the self-same meal, now as nauseous as it was before palatable; this repetition is of course fatal to him, and the impostor gets detected. But there are intellectual cheats who take a lower grade; those who pick up some ingenious idea—say from conversation or a newspaper article—and retail it as their own to each friend they can get by the button-hole. For example, a gentleman whose ac-

quaintance I had just formed made an exceedingly astute remark about somebody's administration somewhere; it certainly was the only good thing he did say, but it led me to believe him well versed in politics. Unfortunately, on meeting him a day or two after, he made the same observation in exactly the same language; I instantly diagnosed him as a second-class cheat, having the administrative idea as his present little dish."

"I should think old Major Harding belongs to this class," remarked Willie;" he comes out wonderfully in the talking line, but always takes care to choose his own topics."

"We won't individualize, or we shall get into scandal," said Mr. Travers; "I agree with you, however, that it is suspicious to see a man picking his material and talking well upon it. The really learned man is one who can converse with an impostor on his own subject; who, when the cheat asks, 'you remember so and so? you have heard of such a man? you are aware of this fact or that fact?' can with truth reply in the affirmative; he who can play second fiddle to any topic that another selects for playing first is the *bona fide* man of knowledge."

"Come, uncle dear," said Edith pleadingly, "you have quizzed human nature enough for one morning. Let us have the breakfast things taken away, draw our chairs up to the fire, and hear all Willie has to tell about the hospital."

"With all my heart," said Mr. Travers. "I am anxious to know your experiences, Willie; so begin at the kitchen floor and don't stop until you get to the tiles."

Thus invited, Willie plunged into a full and graphic description of his sayings and doings during the past week, mentioning, however, nothing of the drunken scene he had witnessed, nor saying a word of what he had been told about Stanley. No doubt he thought that it was not honourable to reveal his companions' misdeeds.

"Oh, Willie, how horrid of him!" exclaimed Edith, on hearing how the surgeon had deceived the child with the diseased limb. "I do think it was dreadful to pretend to be so loving and kind to the poor child, when he knew all the time what a shocking thing he was going to do to her."

"What geese girls are!" said Willie, appealing to his uncle. "Here is Edith working herself into a fit of indignation because Dixon did the kindest thing imaginable. What could have been more cruel than to say, 'Little girl! I am going to cut a great piece out of your leg; it is no use crying, because it must be done, so you had better make up your mind to bear it at once;' yet I suppose this is the sort of thing that Edith would approve of."

"No! no!" returned Edith. "I did not mean that the surgeon should be harsh, but only that he should tell her the truth gently and not deceive her."

"And so," said Willie, "render her thoroughly miserable, take away her appetite, and probably make her so ill as to lessen considerably her chance of recovering from the operation; why, my good sister, your philanthropy would be simply madness."

"I think Willie has the best of the argument,"

said Mr. Travers; "there is such a thing as justifiable deceit, and keeping from the sick a knowledge which would do them harm is an instance of it. There is one grand exception to this rule, and I should wish you, Willie, always to consider it as such. Never, my boy, keep from any dying man the knowledge of his state; tell him plainly that he cannot recover; break it to him as gently, as kindly as you can; but never fail to make him understand. Many doctors will tell you not to do this. They will say that you distress your patient needlessly, and that the fear of death will shorten his life, but you have a higher consideration than this; the sufferer has a soul to be saved, and though you may be inclined to say this is not in my province, this is for the parson to think of and not for me; yet if you believe in Jesus you are his disciple, and as such you are bound to take care for the salvation of your fellow-men. Your patient may be an ungodly man, and the sight of death close at hand may scare him to repentance; in such a case how fearfully culpable is it to give false hope of life! There are few of even the best men who would like to die without a last season of preparation, and by concealing their approaching end you deny them this. If every physician who deceives a dying man would only ask the home question,—How should I, in a similar condition, like to be deceived myself? we should not have so much of this mistaken kindness."

"They never told poor papa, you know, Willie," said Edith, her lip trembling.

"I know they did not," said Mr. Travers, angrily; "they kept the whole household ignorant even of his

danger; and, in consequence, I was not sent for, and my poor brother died without seeing me. Let us change the conversation, for I cannot bear to think of it."

His brother's death had been a sad blow to Mr. Travers; and his not having been sent for was a sore point, dangerous to touch upon. Willie wondered to see his usually placid uncle look so troubled; and he hastened to dash into some more reminiscences of the past few days.

"I took out a tooth yesterday," he said, "for the first time. I have no business to do anything practical during my first year; but the dressers had more than they could do, and so got me and some others to give them help. A huge navvy came in and said, 'Tooth out, please, sir,' and one of the fellows made him sit down in the big operating chair, examined his grinder, and giving me the forceps, told me to extract it. I was in an awful funk, but kept it in, and tried to look as knowing as possible. 'Lance the gum, Travers," the dresser whispered to me, 'and push the forceps well down, and you will be all right.' I followed this advice as well as I was able, and tugged with all my strength. The tooth would not budge, and the perspiration trickled down my face with the exertion I was making. Rendered desperate, I concentrated all my energies into one gigantic effort, and out the thing came with such a rush that it nearly knocked a sound tooth out of the upper jaw. The man rinsed his mouth out as if he thought it was all right, said 'Thank ye, sir,' and walked away.

"I had another thing to do on the afternoon of the same day. The dresser on duty—that is to say, the student whose turn it was to reside in the hospital, and attend to the casualties—wanted to go out for a short time, and asked me to wait about for any accident that should come in. There were no other students in the hospital just then, as the lectures were over, and there was nothing doing; I only happened to be there by chance. I promised to be on the look-out; and if there were anything serious, to call the house surgeon; but if it were a cut finger, or something trifling of that sort, to attend to it myself.

"I had not been waiting many minutes, before in came a man from the ironworks winking a hundred to the minute, and said he had got a bit of steel in his eye. On scrutinizing his optic I saw that there was a bit of something stuck regularly into it. Now the day before a similar case had occurred, and I then saw the dresser get out the bit of metal with the point of a needle; so, thinking that there was no reason why I should not do the same, I made my patient sit down, selected my instrument and prepared for action. In surgical plates of operations on the eye you see fixed, melancholy orbs receiving the point of the knife in a most gentlemanlike manner. Here I had before me a man's cheek, eyelid, and forehead, screwed one into the other, so that I could hardly say which was which; no eye was visible until with great difficulty I lifted the lid, and then an object like an over-ripe gooseberry became perceptible, and sank again into obscurity the instant I let

go. After a great deal of blinking and winking, and catching hold of the eyelashes, and letting them slip again, I managed to keep the lids open, and cautiously advanced the point of my needle towards the foreign body. I was within an eighth of an inch of it, when the patient gave a sudden start, whether from fear or pain I don't know, and I as near as possible ran the needle slap through his eye. The nearness of the shave horrified me almost as much as the man; he jumped from the chair as if he had been shot, clapped a handkerchief to his face and bolted clean out of the surgery, and I never saw him again."

"Oh, Willie!" exclaimed Edith, half in horror and half laughing, "you might have blinded the poor man for the rest of his life; how could you be so rash?"

"The fellow certainly had a lucky escape," said Willie; "I did my best, and it was not my fault if that best nearly turned out the worst for the patient; it was too trifling a thing to bother the house surgeon about; and besides, you know, every one must have a beginning."

"I pity the poor unfortunates experimented on," observed Mr. Travers.

"Then your pity is thrown away, uncle, for students very seldom make a serious mistake: they don't begin practical surgery until their last year, and therefore have plenty of time for looking on before they are allowed to manipulate themselves. There are little blunders of course made; as, for instance, I saw a fellow take out two teeth instead of one; he

dropped the extra one on the floor, put his foot on it, and showed the other tooth to the patient; but he had better have confessed his mistake honestly, for the man saw through his manœuvre and abused him like a pickpocket. An error of this sort is exceptional; most of the men do teeth capitally, and perform the minor operations often with surprising skill."

"Many poor people have a horror of going into hospitals, because they suppose that new remedies will be tried on them which are just as likely to kill as cure," said Mr. Travers.

"I am sure they have no reason to fear," replied Willie. "If I were to be taken ill in my lodgings and had not a comfortable home to go to, I would say directly,—take me to the hospital; for there I should get good nursing, proper diet, and the best medical aid to be had in England. Excuse me, uncle, for saying so, but I believe that experimenting so as to place a patient's life in danger is all bosh; it is never done."

"I did not assert my own belief, I only quoted the superstitions of the poor," replied Mr. Travers.

"Superstition!" exclaimed Willie; "the Irish are the people for that. If an Irishman dies in the hospital, a body of Paddies come and carry him off directly, for fear a *post-mortem* examination should be made. A student told me that, some years ago, an Irish patient in one of the wards was dying of disease of the kidneys: the physician wanted to examine them as it was an interesting case, and asked some of the man's friends to allow him to be opened after death:

they refused with horror, and were so afraid lest the thing should be done on the sly, that, when the poor fellow was near his last breath, they and a lot of others carried his coffin into the ward, placed it on the foot of the bed, waited until he died, popped him in, and carried him off in spite of every one who tried to prevent them."

After relating a few more incidents of a thrilling nature, Willie proposed a walk; and Mr. Travers pleading an engagement that would take him to the city, Edith prepared to accompany her brother alone.

"I ought to tell you, Edith, as housekeeper, before I let you go, that I expect a gentleman here to dinner this evening," said Mr. Travers.

Edith looked surprised, and Willie exclaimed—

"A gentleman to dinner, uncle! you are coming out in the social line! why, we have not had a creature to dine since we lived here."

Nor had they; Mr. Travers was a man who hated what is called society; he called on no one, went to no parties and gave none; he disliked the chit-chat inseparable from visiting and entertaining. "Why people are so fond of conversation, I can't tell;" he once said to a friend who was reasoning with him on his hermit life. "Conversation seems instituted for two purposes, to amuse and instruct; and, in my opinion, nine-tenths of the talking that we endure, does neither the one nor the other. With those whom we really love, talk — however foolish or uninstructive—is pleasant; but conventional gossip is a downright bore. People will do anything for talk; they will gossip for hours about the weather,

the crops, or like uninteresting topics, sooner than hold their tongues. I have often had it asked me: 'You know the story of so and so?' I reply in the affirmative, and yet the person cannot resist telling me the thing word by word, though he is aware that I know its every syllable. I can't comprehend how anyone can voluntarily perform a number of expirations and inspirations, manufacture many complicated sounds, make an effort of memory, and tax the reasoning powers, all for a purpose utterly useless. In nine cases out of ten the person who speaks bores the person who listens. Why are we, then, such gossips? If I want amusement, there are very few of my acquaintances from whose conversation I could gain it; whilst, if I require instruction, I have my books, which contain clever men's best thoughts, carefully elaborated and properly expressed. If the person you talk with does not amuse or inform you, what gratification you can derive from his society I cannot perceive. Some men will say that they gossip for relaxation; it seems to me that this is just what chit-chat cannot give you; to have a creature sitting opposite you, perpetually ejecting small platitudes and waiting for an answer to each, which reply you have to fabricate and throw back without an instant's delay, is, I consider, by no means mentally relaxing. And whatever his observation may be, you must notice it; the most trivial commonplace requires some answer, if it is only a 'humph;' for if you allow any remark to be made without giving a nod or grunt expressive of assent, it falls ridiculously flat, greatly embarrassing the speaker. Suppose, for instance, that you

meet some Irishmen at a dinner party, and in the course of conversation they express a predilection for potatoes; you, perhaps, don't care for potatoes, and in a perfectly natural manner you say so. Suppose that you have made this avowal—that you have stated in a clear and tolerably loud voice, 'I do not care for potatoes'—and suppose that no one thinks himself the person called upon to give the requisite 'indeed, sir!' how awful your position becomes. 'I do not care for potatoes' appears a sentiment so gigantically absurd that you wonder that you could have uttered it; you fancy all eyes fixed upon you with a cold sneer, and are socially dispirited for the rest of dinner, merely because neither Noodle or Foodle, or Doodle or Snoodle, would take the trouble to say 'humph!' But I dislike conversation not only because it bores me, but because it is made up chiefly of brag. Everyone wants to show himself superior to every one else, and tries to lead the talk into a groove suitable for his purpose; he endeavours to twist the conversation so that brag seems necessary either in answer to a question or as part of an explanation.

"Snobby wishes to tell Nobby that he (Snobby) has been in Egypt; and Nobby desires to state that his cousin is the Earl of Blackwood. Nobby, with a view to the Earl, inquires if Snobby shoots.

"Snobby, not seeing his way to Egypt out of this, replies shortly that he is out of practice.

"Nobby volunteers that he had some fine shooting last September, and wants Snobby to ask where.

"Snobby suspicious, declines the question, and generalizes by remarking that it is a fine exercise.

"Nobby, adhesively as regards the Earl: 'So we found it on the First. We reckoned in the evening that we had tramped between twenty and thirty miles. Even the keepers were quite done up; but I got so many birds that I did not feel the fatigue.' Nobby here has gained two points; he has shown that the sport was correctly carried on with gamekeepers, and that he himself is a good shot.

"Snobby feels that he is getting the worst of it, and Egypt growing more and more distant, he becomes depressed. Being obliged to say something, he asks if they used breech-loaders.

"Nobby sees his chance, and replies quickly: 'I had one, and so had another man; but my cousin (Snobby intensely suspicious) will stick to the old-fashioned gun. I have said to him often, "Blackwood, if you could overcome your conservative notions you would get double the birds;" but he always replies, "What was good enough for the old Earl is good enough for me."'

"Nobby has accomplished his brag perfectly, and has shown Snobby that he is on intimate terms with his noble relative.

"Snobby here conceives a method of bringing in Egypt.

"'I have always been afraid of shooting since a gun burst in my hands,' he observes.

"Nobby is bound to enquire how this occurred; and Snobby, now confident of success, replies with animation, 'About four years ago, when I was shooting in Nubia and Upper Egypt.'

"Nobby knows that the gun did not burst, as well

as Snobby knows it himself. Nobby and Snobby par company, each seeing through and heartily despising the other. These braggers have wholly spoilt conversation for non-braggers; men have become so hateful of brag that topics which are the most interesting to the speaker are often barred. Suppose that Snobby is not a bragger, and has spent many years in Egypt, when he comes home, he must ignore his past life. His hopes and fears, and loves, may all be in the country he has left; but he must not speak of them, because persons generally have not been in the East, and would take his remarks for a wish to show his superiority over themselves. Again, Nobby's cousin, the Earl of Blackwood, may be his dearest friend. Nobby may not care a straw for fine acquaintances; yet the world forbids him to mention his friendship, or he would be taken up on suspicion of brag."

CHAPTER VI.

A GLIMPSE OF LONDON AS IT REALLY IS: ARGUMENTS UPON THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION; AND ECCENTRIC IDEAS ABOUT EVENING PARTIES.

THE evening saw Ernest making a fourth at Orange House—for so Mr. Travers' residence was named. Dinner was over, and the diners had gathered round the drawing-room fire. Ernest was talking cheerfully and seemed in good spirits, though he looked pale and worn; he was speaking of how rapidly Crofton and other similar places had been built over. Edith remarked how convenient they were for men of business, who could thus avoid living in London, and yet be there during working hours.

"Then I presume, Miss Travers, that you would not like to live in town," said Ernest.

"Oh no! I should not indeed. I detest London with all my heart."

"Do you know much of it that you dislike it so?"

"I know it pretty well; I could find my way in any of the principal thoroughfares if I were left alone. Of course I do not know the back streets, nobody does."

"Your remark," said Ernest, "exactly illustrates

the sort of knowledge that most people have of our capital; all know the surface, but few penetrate it. You have really seen next to nothing of London, and yet you do not like it; how you would loathe it if you knew it fully! And yet," he added, looking into Edith's face and seeing her bright eyes full of interest fixed upon him, "I think perhaps that I am wrong; if you did know the dark story that I could tell you, you would not, I fancy, loathe, but love the city. Its sorrows would draw forth your sympathy, and your heart would yearn to soothe its sufferings. Richard, if you will allow me, I will tell your niece the history of a poor boy who ran away from home and came to London for the first time. His name was John Martin; his father, by trade, a blacksmith, was a drunkard; he had lost his mother, and his sister being out at service, he was the only one at home. He was a well-disposed boy, willing to work, and had been soundly taught at the village school; his duties were to help at the forge. He worked hard, but was most cruelly treated; his father came home tipsy every night, and no matter how late he obliged his son to sit up for him; and often, on his return, beat the poor boy with anything that he could lay his hands upon, such as the back of a chair, a broom-handle, and even the poker. John Martin bore this usage patiently for a long time, but at last determined to run away. He left all his clothes except the suit he had on, thinking it not honest to take what his father had bought. Of money he had one-and-sixpence, and with this in his pocket he set out early one morning to walk to London, a distance of over two

hundred miles. During the journey he lived upon scraps given him by the farmers' wives, and expended a shilling of his capital upon bread; he slept in barns and out-houses, and arrived in town with very little shoe-leather, and his remaining sixpence. Entering the city in the middle of the day he walked about until night; forgetful of fatigue, hunger, and his miserable situation, and lost in the contemplation of the wonders that surrounded him on every side. Exhausted at last, he sat down upon a door-step and fell asleep; he was soon roused by a rough shake and a voice telling him to move on. He looked up, and seeing a policeman, asked with simplicity where he might sleep.

"'Nowhere out of doors,' replied the policeman; 'haven't you got any money?'

"Martin answered that he had got sixpence.

"'You know very well that you can get a bed in a lodging-house for threepence, you young scamp,' said the officer as he moved away.

"Martin walked on, thinking that he would find a lodging-house and get a night's rest. He asked at several public-houses if they would give him a bed for threepence, but he only got laughed at: then he tried a cheap coffee-house on which was inscribed 'Good Beds,' and the proprietor boxed his ears for daring, as he said, to chaff. In his despair he decided to make for the country again, where he could at least find a hedge-bank or hay-stack for a resting place; but he was dying with hunger, he must have something to eat first; so, seeing a shop opposite with puddings smoking in the window, he entered and purchased a penny slice, and perceiving a ragged

boy eating a similar morsel, he went up to him and said, 'I will give you a penny if you will show me where I can get a bed. I have been told that I can get one for threepence, and I cannot afford more.'

"The boy grinned, pocketed the penny, and led the way out of the shop. As they were walking, he asked Martin a good many questions about himself, what money he had got, &c., and thought, as he told him, he was the greenest chap he had ever clapped eyes on. After passing through several narrow, dirty streets, he stopped before a large tumble-down building, and saying 'You'll get as good a snooze here as anywheres,' walked quickly away.

"Left to himself, Martin entered the house, paid his money, and was shown into a large room in which he counted twenty beds, the greater number of them already occupied. Some of the lodgers were asleep, others were talking, laughing, and singing songs; whilst a few, gathered near the single tallow candle, were playing cards and dominoes. The sheets of the bed assigned to the new-comer were nearly black with use, and the blanket and rug allowed as coverings he could hardly bear to touch. The bed next to him on one side contained a husband, wife, and two children, and on the other side was a group of young thieves sitting on the floor, and talking of what they had stolen during the day; the foulest language came from their young lips, and blasphemies were uttered on every side. In this den of vice our poor boy slept. With the light of day he left the place, and wandering about until the bakers' shops opened, entered one to buy a roll. On putting his hand into his pocket to pay

he found that he had been robbed of the only penny he possessed; and the shopman, thinking that he had come to steal, gave him a cruel kick as he turned away. The boy's spirit was well-nigh broken; he walked on a little distance, sat down and began to cry. All that day he wandered about starving; at night he slept in Covent-Garden Market on the hard stones, and the next morning found some rotten fruit that had been thrown away, and ate it ravenously. Then he thought that he would try begging, though he had hitherto been prevented from this step by shame. He stationed himself at the corner of a street, and narrowly scanned the faces of the passers-by, wondering who appeared the most likely to have pity on him. He fixed upon a benevolent-looking old lady bustling along with a bag on her arm, and with a beating heart stepped forward, touched her upon the shoulder and asked if she would give him a penny. Whether the good lady would have given him anything it is impossible to say, for he had hardly made his supplication before his coat-collar was rudely seized from behind, and he found himself in the hands of a policeman. The man twisted him round, stared him hard in the face, and said, 'Lucky for you, young chap, that I don't know you, or I'd have locked you up. I believe you're a new hand; but don't go trying the game again, or you'll get quodded.'

"Martin begged no more; the day passed, he knew not how; he had become sick and drowsy from want of food. In the evening he saw a number of ragged poor assembled before the door of a large building, and asking one of them why they were there, he was told

for the sake of getting a night's rest in the casual ward of the workhouse. Hearing this he waited, and when the door was opened passed in with the rest. He was shown into the men's ward, where inclined boards strewn with straw and a couple of thick rugs were to serve him as bed. It was a vile hole, and the smell and closeness, owing to bad ventilation and the dirty habits of the lodgers, were scarcely bearable. Bread and gruel were given him; and, having devoured it, he slept soundly in spite of all disagreeables, and woke in the morning with new life. The same allowance of food was given to him as when he entered, and he went away feeling that he had been saved from death. Walking along he came upon a lad of his own age sitting on a door-step with a large basket upon his knees containing one or two bunches of watercresses. Martin had steadily resisted the overtures of the young thieves and vagrants whom he met, feeling, even in the height of starvation, that he would sooner die than live by stealing, but he thought that this boy, though miserably dressed, had an honest look about him, and moreover seemed to follow an honest trade; he therefore went up to him, and sitting down by his side asked him if he kept himself by selling cresses. On being answered in the affirmative, he next inquired if it were possible that he himself could do so. The boy asked if he had any money, and Martin, shaking his head, he suggested that perhaps he had something to sell; receiving a negative to this also, he ran his eye quickly over our hero's clothes. A working suit, torn and threadbare, to an ordinary observer did not give much hope of turning money, but the boy seemed to

think differently. 'You've got a shirt!' he exclaimed: 'why don't you sell that? you'd get threepence or fourpence for it at a dolly shop. If you wait here whilst I run home and leave my basket, as I've done my rounds, I'll come with you.' Martin joyfully promised to be at his post, and after his new acquaintance had left forgot his past miseries in the joyful anticipation of converting his shirt into water cresses, selling them at a large profit, and becoming a prosperous itinerant tradesman, instead of a hungry, vagabond boy. His friend was soon back, and they went together to the dolly shop (a sort of old clothes shop or illicit pawnbroker's), and there Martin divested himself of his linen, and received fourpence for it. He parted with his friend soon after, agreeing to meet him early the next morning in Farringdon Market. He would have liked to return again to the casual ward, but as its inmates were not let out in the morning until eight o'clock, if he went there he would not have been able to keep his engagement; so he spent a penny out of his fourpence for a loaf at supper time, and passed the night under a railway arch undisturbed by the police. Punctually at the appointed time he was at the Market, where he met the kind-hearted cress-boy, who presented him with an old tray for the accommodation of his wares. He purchased a good stock of water cresses for his threepence, pumped on them to freshen them up, and tied them in bundles at four a penny; then he set off to try and sell them. That day he made ninepence; with this he bought for breakfast at a stall a half mug of coffee for a halfpenny, and a slice of bread and butter for the same sum. For

dinner he laid out a halfpenny in a huge baked potato, and a penny in a saveloy. His young friend showed him a more respectable lodging-house than the one in which he had last slept; and there he paid threepence, and for a halfpenny purchased of his landlady a piece of a loaf, leaving threepence to invest in the next day's stock. So he lived on from day to day, sometimes making as much as a shilling, and at others not more than fourpence, until a coachman, to whom he had sold regularly, asked him some questions about himself, and heard the whole of his sad story. Touched by the lad's hardships and manful struggles, he gave him half-a-crown. Martin then gave up water cresses, and embarked in oranges; he bought fifty for one and sixpence, and hired a basket for a penny a day. In this trade I found him earning from six to seven shillings a week, and contented, happy, and grateful to God.

"This is my story, Miss Travers; it is dull and unromantic, but it is true. I have told it in order to give you a glimpse of the inner life of our London poor. Martin is the type of thousands who come to London from the country, and manfully struggle to live; some die in the battle, many fight it out, and more, perhaps, pressed by hunger, yield themselves to the devil, and become thieves. Numbers of our poor know no other home than lodging-houses, such as the one I have described, and many are obliged to spend their nights in the streets. Do you like London now?"

Edith murmured something unintelligibly, and Ernest saw that her eyes were filled with tears.

"I should not have thought it possible to live upon so little as this boy did," said Willie.

"I have known many to live on much less; compared with numbers of others, my hero was wealthy."

"It is startling to consider what we call necessaries, after hearing how little is required to support life," observed Mr. Travers.

"It is indeed," answered Ernest. "I sometimes hate myself as I sit down to a good dinner such as we have just eaten, and think how many the price of it would feed, if laid out in bread." "But my feelings are getting the better of my politeness," he added smiling; "I must not talk in this way."

"You do a great deal amongst the poor, Mr. Graham; so my uncle tells me," said Edith.

"I do what I can, and that is very little," answered Ernest, humbly. "You would do the same, if you knew what I know."

"I!" exclaimed Edith; "what could I do? I am only a girl."

"I know a young lady in London, who, when about your age, began the work of the Lord. Ten years have passed since she commenced her labours, and during that time she has persuaded nearly two hundred children to attend school; she has reclaimed nine drunkards, and fifteen unfortunate girls; how many ragged little outcasts through her teaching are now holding good situations as Christians and useful members of society, I am afraid to say."

Edith gazed at Ernest in amazement.

"And all this was done by a weak woman!" she exclaimed; "it seems incredible."

"It does," replied Ernest. "The prayer in the general thanksgiving, that we may give ourselves to God's service, must have been answered to the letter in her case, or she could not have effected the wonders that she did. This young lady's case," he added emphatically," should be a great encouragement to us all."

Edith did not answer, but seemed lost in thought.

"Drunkenness," said Mr. Travers, "is the cause of nearly all the misery in London. Sixty thousand of our countrymen in Great Britain die annually from drink; and yet, when I see the poor wretches of our streets flocking to the public-houses, I have no heart to blame them. They are without a hope in life, without a hope hereafter; their only pleasure lies in forgetfulness that they exist. Drink brings them a negative delight, such as a dog seems to find in sleep; it relieves them for the moment of the burden of living. Suppose that one of these poor creatures finds himself at the close of the day with more money than his stomach actually craves for food, he will enjoy himself, he thinks, and goes to a public-house and calls for gin. When he has muddled his head so that he forgets the past and has no thought for the morrow, he is—as far as he can be or ever has been—happy. If we wanted amusement after a hard day's work, we should perhaps take a walk, or read an entertaining book, play a game at chess, or call upon some friend; but if our nature were so degraded as to be wholly animal, if we were homeless, friendless, and without God in the world, I question if we should not drink."

"The condition of the poor must certainly be raised before we can hope to stop this vice," said Ernest; "and it is chiefly to be done by education. Ragged schools are the grand preventive of crime and misery; I wish we had more pupils and more teachers. The latter, however, is our great want at present; and it seems wonderful that, whilst so many good Christians live in London, so few should be found to volunteer their services."

"This, no doubt, is in great part owing to the fact that the wealthier classes have of late years migrated in such numbers from the city to the suburbs and adjacent country," observed Mr. Travers.

"That is true," replied Ernest; "yet even these might assist, if they were able and willing to come up daily or even weekly for the purpose. It is easy to do this for business, why not for God? But there are multitudes of good men and women who live in the very centre of want and crime, and yet make no personal effort for their prevention. The fact is that most Christians will give their money, but very few will give their time; and there is little doubt in my mind which of the two is the more acceptable to God. A pecuniary gift is seldom an act of self-denial. If you, Richard, give me a sovereign for a family in distress, you sleep in as soft a bed, eat as good a breakfast, and have the same gratifications as if you had your pound in your pocket. But if, instead of giving me anything, you set to work to find employment for the husband, washing or needlework for the wife, and get the children sent to school, you sacrifice your bodily comfort, ease of mind, and perhaps hours

which would have been engaged in some profitable worldly concern. I take this, my friend, to be true charity."

Ernest did not mean this supposititious case to be a rebuke to Mr. Travers; he knew that the latter, after his own fashion, spent much of his time in doing good to the poor.

"I quite agree with you," said Mr. Travers; "and I think that a man who has saved one soul by his own exertions will receive a greater reward than one who in giving a fortune saves a hundred through the medium of others. But to return to the topic of drunkenness, from which we are digressing. I think with you, that education is the great prophylactic against this vice; witness the comparatively little drinking amongst the upper classes; but an evil already in existence not only requires a preventive of its recurrence but demands also a cure. Forbidding traffic in spirituous liquids is the great desideratum to accomplish this; and a law to this effect would be the greatest blessing that our nation could receive.

"A good man lately said that 'when gambling houses were proved before parliament to be ruining the youth of the aristocracy, the evil was at once put down. When it was also proved that betting-houses were corrupting the morals of tradesmen and merchants' clerks, every betting-house was ordered to be closed. With the nobility and commerce in danger, no one talked about the liberty of the subject, or proposed that these evils should be met by education; and yet thousands and tens of thousands suffer the

loss of fortune, virtue, character, body and soul, in the drinking shops; which the law does not forbid, but license. For every one the gambling or betting-houses ruined these are ruining hundreds."

"But if it is impossible to induce Government to root out the evil," said Ernest, "we must do what we can by our own exertions. Let a number of model lodging-houses be so constructed that their rooms may be let at a cheap rate. The few that we have at present demand far too high a rent for the means of the really poor. They are only suited to prosperous workmen, and do not benefit in the least those who most require them. What we want are comfortable houses for those who struggle for their livelihood, and we must not charge a rent which they cannot afford to pay. As long as the present system of housing continues, vice and disease will abundantly thrive. I have often seen as many as ten persons, men, women, and children, living in one small room. And I know a court containing thirty houses which lodges more than a thousand souls. The atmosphere in such dwellings as these is so foul as to be wholly unfit for respiration, and the smells are so abominable that they have often driven me almost fainting into the open air. How can we hope that poor creatures who dwell in homes of this description will abstain from drowning their misery in drink."

"There is indeed little improvement to be hoped for," said Mr. Travers. "As long as our poor are herded together like pigs, and in houses no better than a sty, we cannot expect to eradicate drunkenness by mild measures. Amongst the more respectable

victims of this vice much may be done by the force of example, by total abstinence on the part of all professing Christians desirous to do good. Suppose each godly man who is an abstainer to have ten persons, friends and dependents, under the immediate influence of his example. Suppose two out of the ten to become abstainers like himself. Each of these converts will exercise an influence over other friends and other servants, and these others upon others, and so *ad infinitum*. If one could do so much, what would thousands do! I do honestly think that every one who gives up intoxicating liquids indirectly saves many from ruin, even though he may know nothing of the good he has done. My water drinking, for what I know, may at this moment be reclaiming a drunkard in the north of England whom I have never seen or heard of. Come, Willie, you are the only one in the room who takes wine; what have you to say in its defence?"

Willie, who had been growing hot and uncomfortable during the conversation, was glad of an opportunity of speaking. He replied that temperance was better than abstinence, and that the one as an example would be just as effectual as the other.

"An example of moderation," said Ernest, "is not so effectual as one of abstinence, because it is not so striking, and therefore leaves less impression. If I, at a dinner party, eat little meat with my vegetables; you sitting next to me would not notice the fact, or if you did would think little of it. But if you saw me eating all vegetables and no meat, you would say to yourself this is a queer thing to do, what can be

the object of it? does he dislike meat, or is it hurtful to him? and perhaps you would privately ask me my reasons for what I did. I should then state my objections to animal food; you would perhaps find them plausible, and might be led to adopt my course yourself.

"Then again, an example of moderation is not so easy to follow as one of abstinence. A labourer who has been accustomed to three or four quarts of beer a day cannot stop at a couple of glasses. With the taste in his mouth and the fumes in his head he is not the same man as before he touched the liquor. If you go to a supper party, and (considering before you set out the advantages of temperance, the sin of excess, and its disagreeable effects) you make up your mind to take only three glasses of wine. When you have finished the third, and a fourth is pressed upon you, you reason about taking it less wisely than you did at home. Your brain, then cool, is now excited by the society and what you have drunk; the fear of consequences is lessened, and the desire for present enjoyment increased. You fill your glass, drain it; and then, feeling that you have sinned, become fidgetty and uncomfortable, and in desperation argue, 'My resolution is broken and there is an end of it, I may as well enjoy myself for to-night;' and so, stifling conscience, you drink on. I fear that moderation is guilty of causing many a sin which has dragged him who committed it down to the bottomless pit. But for that one moderate glass taken at a moment when the passions were roused and the devil within was pressing him hard, many a criminal would be an honest man."

"Perfectly true," said Mr. Travers. "Trace any guilty pleasure to its origin and you will light upon a glass of wine, brandy-and-water, or a bottle of Bass. If Satan and man exactly balance each other when weighed over a sin, and a couple of ounces of wine be dropped into man's throat, his scale instantly sinks; he falls into the sin, whilst the devil rises in triumph. Evil inclination sometimes presses morality into so small a compass that a thimblefull of brandy is quite sufficient to drown her. If we were all to look back upon our past lives we should find that most of our so-called indiscretions have been committed after an exhilarating glass of wine in pleasant society."

"I wonder more people are not water drinkers from preference," observed Edith; "I have always been used to water, and I don't like wine or beer."

"I believe your taste to be everyone's naturally," replied Ernest. "I am sure nature did not give us a liking for these things, for if we recall our childhood we shall remember how we abhorred them. Sweet wines, and perhaps port, we thought nice; but sherry, hock, sauterne, and claret were all disagreeable, whilst beer and spirits were positively nauseous. And surely, knowing this, it seems incomprehensible that parents should get their children into the habit of taking what their nature rebels against. Children will do anything in imitation. They see their elders drinking wine with evident gratification, and they want some too. They taste it, don't like it, think they ought to, and persevere until they do.

"Fathers should beware how they offend these little ones; their own liberty may be a stumbling block to those they love best."

"If I were married," said Edith with simplicity, "I would not allow my children to drink wine until they had left my care."

"You need not go quite so far as that," replied Ernest, "a thing has often a false value attached to it because forbidden; and your children might look forward to the time when they should be free to indulge themselves as they pleased. I would rather set them a good example than use force."

"My belief is, without joking," said Mr. Travers, "that with high, low, rich, and poor, the great principle of taking pleasure is to get partially drunk. Social enjoyment is but another term for alcoholic excitement. Froth gooseberry into people's glasses instead of champagne, give them syrups instead of port or sherry, and what a decrease there would be in dinner parties! Bachelor parties of young men are given purely for the sake of getting in a social manner partly or wholly drunk. Imagine the misery of an intellectual abstainer at one of these entertainments. Fancy the song, toast or sentimental principle of the man who does not drink. The whole aim of social intercourse is excitement. The more of this commodity that a host can manufacture at an evening party, so much the better are hospitalities said to go off. Mrs. J.'s party went off well, simply means that her guests were kept highly excited from ingress to exit; she would be a cunning woman to accomplish this feat without making them partially drunk. It is not necessary that all should be in this condition, because persons who are a little tipsy can diffuse a great deal of their false spirits amongst those of the

sober who are naturally excitable, such as young girls, and men who have seen but little of the world. Ten spuriously flushed individuals will in this way ferment a party of thirty and enable it to go off well. Every host mentally addresses his guests thus:—'Ladies and gentlemen, your animal spirits are not sufficient to enable you to be convivial this evening. In your normal state you are not amusing. You will be bored and I shall be bored. The corners of your mouth, I perceive, have a downward tendency, and your muscles of risibility are flaccid; they require an artificial stimulus. In those decanters you will find port and sherry; in those silver-capped bottles there is champagne. Intoxicate yourselves, I pray you, as speedily as possible; then you will be funny; then you will be merry; then you will dance, laugh, ogle, and sparkle; and my party will go off well.'

"Look at pic-nics and croquet parties, how depressing they are before the drink, and how delightful after! Ask any man you meet what he thinks of tea fights, and he will tell you that they bore him beyond measure. Why? Because there are no means of getting partially drunk. When I use this offensive term I only speak the truth. Every man who has taken wine until he flushes in the face or feels unusually inclined to talk, is—if he has but taken a single glass—partially drunk."

Mr. Travers having delivered himself of these eccentric sentiments, Ernest suddenly discovered that he had barely time to catch the train for London, and after rapid adieux he left the house.

CHAPTER VII.

GALLANT RESCUE OF A HUMAN LIFE, A STUDENT'S CONVIVIAL, ITS AFTER EFFECTS, AND A FIRST ESSAY AT THE GAME OF BILLIARDS.

EARLY on Monday morning Willie returned to London, visited the wards of the hospital, and went home to master those incomprehensible bones which so much puzzled him. Cheering his flagging moments by the prospect of future successes, he worked hard until the afternoon; when, remembering that he had some business to transact at the West-end, he laid aside his books, and made his way to the nearest pier, in order to take a convenient steamer that would carry him near his destination. Arriving in time to save a boat that was just starting, he quickly jumped on board, and was paddled away through the muddy waters of Father Thames. Whilst stopping *en route* at one of the wharfs, to put down some passengers, and receive others, a little girl hurrying on board after her mother as the boat was beginning to move away, tripped over an iron chain that lay on the ground, and fell headlong into the water. There was a tumult of consternation. The poor mother uttered a piercing shriek, and fell on the deck in a swoon. No boat was near, and the child was borne swiftly

down by the current, nothing of its body visible but the arms stretched out, as though it tried in vain to catch something to stay it in the rush to death. Willie was close to the child as she fell, and the shock of the sight for the moment deprived him of presence of mind. He had often longed to save a life from drowning. He had pictured the heroism of the act, the flinging off coat and waistcoat, the wild header from some dizzy height, the long dive, the cool tact necessary to avoid the clutch of the sinking man, and the laborious swim with his burden amidst the plaudits of the multitude. Such thoughts had many a time built up his castle in the air; and the time had now come to realize these fancies; he must risk his life to save this little girl. All the blood of his body seemed to fly to his cheeks, as the conviction flashed upon him. He dared not, he could not plunge into that swift, black water, and perhaps be whirled away helpless to destruction. And yet to see a young child drown whilst he, a strong swimmer, stood idly by! conscience would ever after hiss coward in his ear. "I will do it, or die!" he exclaimed, and throwing off coat and boots he leapt into the river and disappeared. A few seconds, and he came up again swimming with the strong tide which bore him irresistibly along. The passengers, with pale faces and straining eyes, anxiously watched his progress. They saw him nearing a bridge, through which the water rushed with the velocity of a rapid. "The child has sunk!" they exclaimed with horror. "No, thank God, I can see an arm!" "He is nearing it!" "How bravely he swims!" "Now he is close!"

"He has seized the child!" "Horrible, they are both sucked down!"

A dense crowd had now assembled on the wharf, and the bridge also was thronged with people. Suddenly from these latter burst a tumultuous cheer; and, through the arches, those on the steamer could faintly distinguish two heads, which must be Willie's and the child's. A boat was being rowed quickly towards them, and in another moment they were saved.

The little girl was senseless. She was taken to the nearest house, brought back to life by warmth and friction, and restored to her joyful mother's arms. Willie (little the worse for his ducking, except in appearance), after ascertaining that the child would live, escaped from the mother's overwhelming gratitude, and tried to slip through the admiring crowd to a cab and get home. Whilst endeavouring to effect this manœuvre, who should he come upon but Stanley. The latter instantly recognized him, in spite of his muddy face and dripping clothes, and exclaimed, "By Jove! so you are the hero, Travers! I saw the whole affair from beginning to end, and there never was a nobler, pluckier thing done in the world. Why don't you cheer him?" he shouted to the crowd, waving his hat.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" burst simultaneously from every mouth. "Up with him," cried Stanley. "Up with him on to your shoulders, and carry him home. I will lead the way." In an instant Willie was seized and hoisted up by a dozen hands, Stanley leading the procession towards his own rooms, which were close by,

and singing, in a rich voice, "See the conquering hero comes," in which his followers joined in various keys. The lodgings reached, Willie was allowed to regain his legs; and Stanley, by skilful diplomacy, managed to get his friend and himself into the house, and to keep the crowd out. He then had his bath filled with hot water, made Willie take a good ablution, and afterwards wrapped him in three or four blankets on the sofa, and poured some hot brandy and water down his throat. Willie, who had been a little stunned, more from the noise and excitement than the wetting, soon revived under this treatment; and, from the combined effects of gratitude and grog, felt very friendly disposed towards Stanley.

"I am awfully obliged to you for being so kind," he said, "though I must say I wish you had not set those confounded roughs at me; they have nearly pulled me to pieces."

"Oh, never mind that," replied Stanley, laughing. "I wanted you to come away with honour after your courageous act. Do you know, Travers," he added gravely, "I thought it was all over with you, when you sank under the bridge."

"I had not the power of thought. The water was roaring in my ears, my eyes were full of mud, and I was spinning round like a teetotum. I hardly knew, even, that I had got the kid until the boatman hooked me out."

"Have some more brandy, old fellow; I am sure you need it, after all that you have been through."

"Nonsense! I am omnipotent as your doctor now; warmth within, to counteract cold without, is my pre-

scription, and you must obey orders." So saying, Stanley mixed two stiff tumblers, administered one to his patient, and reserved the other for himself. Thinking it useless to resist, Willie drank what was given him, and soon grew exceedingly talkative and confidential, and felt an irresistible inclination to laugh at nothing in particular.

"The servant shall go to your place, and fetch some clothes," said Stanley; "and we will dine together at a snug little crib I know of, not far from here. Do you approve of my resolution?"

"I should like it above all things," replied Willie, feeling the impossibility of working with a brandied brain. The servant was accordingly despatched, and the clothes brought. Whilst dressing, Willie could not help feeling some misgivings about Stanley, remembering what Wilson had told him of his drinking propensities. "I believe it's a regular calumny," he muttered to himself, after a few minutes' thought. "Why, he is the most gentlemanly, agreeable, kind-hearted fellow that I have ever met. Wilson is jealous, and slanders him from spite;" and, having arrived at this conclusion, he finished his toilet and rejoined his friend, with a mind made up that Wilson was a low sneak, and Stanley a highly estimable character.

At dinner, Stanley ordered a bottle of champagne, to celebrate, he said, the saving of a human life. Willie, whose brain was still misty with the brandy and water, would have liked to refuse, but had not the moral courage to do so. By the time the bottle was finished he had become noisy, making personal

remarks upon those who were dining near, and laughing boisterously at his own wit. Seeing this, Stanley proposed to go. "I am engaged to join a bachelor party," he said, and, if you like, I will take you with me; I am sure they will be glad to see you."

"All right; I am game for anything," returned Willie, convivially, lighting a cigar, and puffing at it vigorously.

As they were walking, Stanley explained that the party was given by a student of St. Augustin's hospital, in honour of his having passed the College of Surgeons.

It was easy to guess the house, when they had once entered the street in which it was situated, by the ringing chorus that pealed through some first-floor windows. "They are hard at it," said Stanley, as he knocked at the door.

On being admitted, they passed up at once to the room from which the noise proceeded.

Chairs, sofa, and a couple of benches provided sitting accommodation for from twenty to thirty students. All were smoking; some had cigars, some meerschaums, and others public-house clays; whilst each had a tumbler of punch in his hand, or on the ground beside him. A round table in the middle of the room supported a huge china bowl of punch, a washhand basin containing a similar compound, black bottles, tobacco jars, cigar boxes, and vases full of twisted tapers.

A young man who was busily ladling punch into a number of expectant tumblers, stopped in his occu-

pation as the new comers entered, and gave them a cordial welcome. A portmanteau was dragged from the bedroom, and turned into a settee for their accommodation, as there was not another chair to be had; and they were soon comfortably ensconced, each with a tumbler of reeking punch in his hand.

"Stanley," said the host, "you were always great in the musical line; give us something of your best, with a splendid chorus."

Thus invited, Stanley removed his cigar from his mouth, took a long pull at the grog, and trolled out a fine old song with a refrain well known to all. Every voice thundered the chorus with the vigour of young lungs; the noise was so deafening, that Willie could scarcely hear himself sing, though he bawled with all his might.

Then came a lull, and Stanley's clear, manly voice alone was heard; and then the storm of bass, tenor, barytone and nothing-at-all burst forth again, and so on until the performance ended. Then a hammering of feet, clapping of hands, and battering spoons on glasses, and then the comparative quiet of a conversational buzz.

Willie was next desired to oblige; and having a very fair voice, and knowing several songs that Edith had taught him, he answered that he would sing with pleasure if they would accept something without a chorus, as he knew nothing with one.

"Quite immaterial," replied the host; "we will make a chorus to it, if it's the most sentimental thing ever concocted."

After this encouragement, Willie gave the company

a plaintive Scotch ballad; and the last line of every verse was caught up and repeated by each student in any grotesque tune he could think of, mangling the poor little ditty most effectually. After this, a weak-looking youth, in a distant corner, was seen struggling with his voice, and the company became aware that Alonzo he was handsome, and Alonzo he was young. This and further information concerning the same gentleman having been received with great applause, a deep-chested individual allowed his voice to run away with him in a noisy effusion of a patriotic character; and the loyalty of his hearers having been properly stimulated thereby, a young gentleman with an expansive brow planted his hands on the table as if about to vault it, and let off "Othello's Apology," with a determined air. Urged by this example, a dark, stumpy little man began gruffly to articulate "The Bridge of Sighs;" and being interrupted by strong symptoms of disapprobation before he had slaughtered half-a-dozen lines, changed the recitation to a negro melody, which being the essence of stupidity, and creating an immense noise, naturally proved an unparalleled success. Three or four other musical guests having in turn become nuisances, and the bowl and washhand basin having been emptied and refilled, Stanley, who had been drinking hard, rose rather unsteadily to his feet, and rapped loudly upon the table.

"Gentlemen!" he said in a loud voice, "I must request your silence for some minutes, for I have a toast to propose. That young man whom you see sitting there (pointing to Willie), and whom I am

proud to call my friend, performed this morning an heroic action. A fair girl of tender years, in fact a mere child, was stepping on that wondrous contrivance of science, a Thames steamer, when her delicate foot caught in some obstructive iron, and with a despairing cry she was precipitated into the boiling surf. Did a crowd of boatmen instantly rush to their respective tubs to save her? Did a dozen hands seize life-preservers and fling them within her reach? Gentlemen! nothing of this sort was done. The lookers-on, in cowardice or apathy, stood idly by. That young man (or shall I not rather say hero?) upon the portmanteau, despising ropes and corks, or any such implement to aid him, plunged unarmed into the yawning depths. Breasting the waves as gallantly as Leander of olden time, or as the present champion of natation at the Lambeth baths, he reached the infant, caught her in his arms, pressed her to his ample breast, and fearful to relate, sank with her in the boiling surge. I, with these eyes, beheld them disappear; I marked the treacherous deep close over their moistened heads; and though I knew not until afterwards that the man who had gone down was my dearest friend, yet the suspense that filled my bosom was agonizing to bear. He rose again, that gallant youth, holding stiffly at arms' length the senseless infant's form. The oars of a boat's crew flashed in the sunbeams; a friendly boat-hook introduced itself beneath the collar of our hero's coat, and, without betraying by the movement of a muscle that he was inconvenienced by the instrument, without a moment's hesitation he suffered himself to

be saved. Gentlemen, let us wish prosperity to the noble actor in this drama of real life. Toast him, my friends, cordially, socially, and convivially; and do not allow your feelings to make you forget the accompaniment of musical honours."

The eloquent simplicity of this effusion was properly appreciated. The cheering was terrific; Willie's hand was gripped, moved about, twisted, and pressed with a violence that must have afforded him the highest gratification. Bumpers were drained to his health, and "He is a jolly good fellow"—the musical honours—were sung in the loudest possible key. Willie, by this time helplessly tipsy, got upon his legs and tried to respond; but he was past the talking stage, and could only stammer forth a few words to the effect that his feelings overcame him, and lurch back to his seat again. He knew little of how the remaining time passed. Comic songs, and coarse ones too, were introduced; and then there was a quarrel; and a bottle of brandy hurled at some one near the fire-place, missed its object, and smashed to atoms on the bars of the grate, the spirit catching light and throwing out a great sheet of flame. He was conscious soon after this of Stanley placing him in a cab, and of his getting in himself; and he knew no more until he woke up the next morning, in bed with half his clothes on, his brain on fire, and scarcely able to see. At first he could not understand what was the matter, and thought that he must have met with some dreadful accident; then the memory of yesterday came over him, and he buried his face in the pillow, as if to shut out the conviction of his

degradation. Soon he rose and bathed his burning head, and poured the contents of his water bottle down his parched throat. Glancing at the looking-glass, he hardly knew his own reflection, the blear eye and blanched cheek of drunkenness had so distorted it. Throwing himself on his bed again, he tried to sleep: the attempt was useless; had his tortured body allowed him rest, the stings of conscience would have kept him wakeful. He got up, and looked at his watch; it had stopped; so he rang the bell and asked the time.

"Past one o'clock, sir," was the reply.

"At home I should now be at lunch with Edith," he thought; and, as he pictured himself happy and full of health and spirits, and thought of his bright, innocent sister, and her deep love for him, the contrast between his happiness two days ago, and his utter misery now, struck him so vividly that he dropped into a chair and sobbed like a child. With a great effort he dressed himself and entered his sitting room, omitting for the first time in his life a morning prayer. The breakfast things were still awaiting him on the table, so he ordered some tea.

"And ham and eggs, sir?" suggested the servant.

"No! no! nothing but tea," he answered irritably, sick at the very thought of food. "Stay," he added, "bring a jug of cold water also; I am very thirsty this morning."

He was thirsty, to judge by the way that tumbler after tumbler of cold water disappeared, and the insatiable manner in which he attacked the tea. Presently he heard a knock at the street-door, and

some one asking if Mr. Travers was at home. It is Stanley, he exclaimed mentally, recognising the voice. "I can't see him, I am too ill; I will go to my bedroom, ring the bell, and tell the servant to say so;" and he was about to carry out his intention, when Stanley, without ceremony, entered the room. Except being a little paler than usual, and looking very glassy about the eyes, he seemed none the worse for last night's orgy.

"Poor fellow! you do look seedy," he said sympathisingly, on seeing Willie's pitiful appearance. "Let me see what I can do for you: you have been taking?—ah! I see, tea and cold water, and plenty of both, I have no doubt. They are bad things in your state; your nerves are shattered, and want putting together again; water won't do this, and though tea picks you up for the moment, it is no good in the long run. Come with me, old fellow, and I will give you something that will make you as energetic as a busy bee."

Willie assenting, though without much faith in the promised relief, Stanley took him to a famous pastrycook's and ordered a basin of soup and an iced cider cup. After a good pull at this latter, Willie was able to eat the soup, and felt much invigorated; and by the time the cider cup was finished, he told his companion that he was a new man. The fact was that the strong compound added to the remaining fumes of last night's punch had acted as morning stimulants always do after a night's debauch, and made the poor fellow again half tipsy.

"I knew that I could cure you," said Stanley

triumphantly; "you don't look so much like a subject for dissection as you did half an hour ago. How you managed to incapacitate yourself so hopelessly last night I can't conceive."

"I believe the Thames adventure and subsequent brandy and water over-excited me," replied Willie, who was anxious to appear less culpable in the eyes of his friend.

"You feel all right after my medicine; it has proved a regular specific; has it not?"

"Yes, I am jolly now; though my intellect is not over clear, and I seem to see everything through a thick veil."

"You are a young hand, and must expect to pay some penalty for your conviviality. Even I, who preserved my sober senses yesterday, don't get off scot free; for my mouth feels as if I had been sucking penny pieces for the last twelve hours, and my spirits are so depressed, that if temperance were not my motto, I should be tempted to indulge in a bumper of cognac. Stevens, in my condition, would in a minute."

"He drinks a great deal, does he not?"

"Yes, he carries it too far. I spend my evenings sociably, and sometimes take a little more than I can carry; but he begins the first thing in the morning, and before dinner he is often as drunk as an opium-eater. He takes a glass of neat brandy before he dresses, and has the bottle by his side as a sick man has barley water."

"He will be a dead man soon," said Willie, horrified to hear of such infatuation.

"So I tell him. I have warned him often, but he only laughs, and declares I am just as bad. If I am asked to any convivial where I know I shall find him, I never go now; for I will not drink with him if I can help it. If he were to pop off suddenly whilst I was seeming to countenance his folly, I should never forgive myself."

"What a good disposition he has to be so careful not to lead another astray!" thought Willie.

Stanley now proposed a stroll, saying that he should like a cigar.

"Better not," he said, as Willie was about to light a weed for himself. "Nothing throws a novice back so much as smoking; it will set your heart palpitating and give you the blues again. Come and have a game of billiards; that will pass the time better than anything."

Willie said that he was unable to play.

"Never mind, you will soon learn," replied Stanley, "I will take your under my special protection, and you will progress like a prairie fire. Come along," he added, persuasively, leading the way out of the shop.

Willie required no more pressing, so they adjourned to a billiard establishment near the hospital and entered the public room. It was full of students engaged in pool — (pool is a game that requires several players; each of whom stakes a sum of money, and the fund thus acquired is divided between the winners, if there are two; if only one, he appropriates the whole). Most of the men in the room belonged to St. John's, and Willie saw several whom he knew.

"You are just in time," remarked one of them; "we have only this moment begun."

"Travers is not much of a player," said Stanley; "you must let him in with four lives to our three, or he won't have a chance."

This proposal being assented to, Stanley announced to Willie that it was his turn to play, and recommended him to chalk his cue and proceed to action.

Being told to hit a white ball at the further end of the table in a particular spot, which feat he could not have accomplished in his steadiest moments, it is not surprising that with the present tendency of his vision to turn one into two, his aim should be somewhat erratic; its only result being an inch-long rupture with the point of his cue in the green cloth.

"Confound it!" exclaimed Stanley, looking ruefully at the disaster; "they will make you fork out a guinea for that."

"The fine for cutting the cloth is one pound one," said the marker, walking up to Willie and holding out his hand with a business-like air.

Looking very crest-fallen, Willie took out his purse, paid the money, and the game went on. He made so many blunders that Stanley tried to persuade him to stop playing; but the silly fellow, thinking it fine to appear careless of losing his money, persisted in going on, until at last he had got rid of all that was in his pocket.

"Have some beer, Travers?" said Stanley, who had been playing beautifully and winning everything. "Here, marker, get two tankards of ale; I shan't play any more, but shall keep you company in looking on."

The beer having arrived, Willie was in the act of

drinking, when a shout of "Hullo! there's the fellow who was so gloriously screwed last night," caused him to stop and look round. Stevens, who had entered the room unperceived, was pointing at him, and every one was laughing. Willie—his cheeks burning with shame—tried to laugh also, and appear as if he thought it a capital joke; but the attempt was feeble, and Stanley, perceiving his embarrassment, tried to direct attention into another channel by returning Stevens' chaff.

"It must have been some phantom of your beery imagination," he said.

"Perhaps so," replied Stevens sarcastically. "No doubt I dreamt that Pierson of St. Augustin's gave a party last night; that Travers was there; that he got up with the intention of thrilling the company with his eloquence, and found himself too drunk to utter a word; and that he was helped down stairs by you and another fellow and tumbled into a cab like a log of wood. A curious thing, too, that Tom Furleigh should have been at the party and told me my dream. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Suppose Travers did have a little too much, you are not so immaculate as to have a right to banter him," said Stanley.

"I don't pretend to be. I hate to see a fellow sticking up for what he is not. Everybody thought Travers belonged to the hard-working set. I am delighted to find he is not such an ass."

"Are you going to play billiards?" asked Stanley, wishing to change the conversation.

"Not I," returned Stevens, "I am far too shaky.

I am coming to sit down and talk to you, and at the same time absorb a moderate jugful of egg flip." "Here, Travers," he added, as the foaming compound made its appearance, "take a dip into this; it will do you good after last night's work.

"I didn't mean to offend you by what I blurted out just now," he said, seeing that Willie refused rather curtly. "I like you all the better for taking your liquor like a man, and so we all do."

"If you will excuse me, I am going home," said Willie, rising from his seat.

"Going home!" exclaimed Stanley. "Why, what's the row?"

"I don't feel well," Willie replied in a low voice, "and I shall go and lie down a little."

This was no false excuse; for, though he had felt his humiliation keenly, and was glad to get away on that account, yet the stimulus of the cider cup having worn off, it had left him more depressed than before he had taken it; and now the beer had caused sensations of sickness which were very disagreeable. When he got home, he locked himself in his bedroom, and, kneeling down, prayed passionately for forgiveness of his great sin. "Oh my God!" he cried, "do not punish me so bitterly. Give me back my character, my good name. O Father, thou art ever merciful! It is the first time that I have so fallen; I pray thee, lift me up. Lord, have pity on me. I am so miserable. I do repent, I do indeed, with all my soul and strength. Oh spare me, and I will never sin again. Hear me, oh God! Hear me! I pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

CHAPTER VIII.

A BOXING MATCH; A BOAT RACE; AND AN AFTER-DINNER TALK.

WILLIE passed the remainder of the day alone, sorrowful and repentant. He rose the next morning full of good resolutions, opened his books directly after breakfast, and commenced work in earnest, so as to redeem the time that had been lost. His intellects were less clear than usual, and difficulties consequently harder to overcome. Sometimes he had to read over a sentence a dozen times before he could get at its meaning; still, for some time he persevered, feeling that he was doing just penance for his past misdeeds. At last he pushed the book away in despair, and exclaiming, "It's of no use; I have no more brains to-day than a pig!" walked to the window, opened it, and looked out. The weather was charming; the sun shining brightly, and even the London air was clear and bracing.

"I should uncommonly like to go out," he thought, "but I won't. I am determined to punish myself. I will bring my book here and read; perhaps a cool breeze on my brow will quicken my perceptions. I do think that is Stanley coming up the street! It is. He sees me, and is waving his hand."

"How are you this morning, Travers?" asked Stanley, when he had reached the window.

"I am all right, thank you, except that I am not much up to reading. I have been fagging away the last two hours, and scarcely understanding anything."

"Throw me down the latch-key, and I will come up and help you."

Willie expressed his thanks, and jerked out the key. Having let himself in, Stanley seated himself at the table, and examined Willie's book.

"Reading chemistry, are you? Tell me what it is you don't understand."

Willie pointed out some of the usual stumbling-blocks of young beginners; and Stanley, by clear explanations aptly illustrated, soon swept them away. After working in this way for more than an hour, the teacher suggested to his pupil that they had done enough, and proposed that they should reward themselves for their mental exertions by a pull on the river. Willie, delighted at what he had learned, and exceedingly grateful to his instructor, readily acquiesced.

"We will take the steamer to Lambeth, get a boat there, and row down Putney way," said Stanley; and off they went in high spirits.

Arrived at Lambeth, they hired a pair-oared outrigger, and were soon gliding down the river with vigorous strokes. Stanley was a finished oar, and had won some well-contested races. He had rowed several matches in the last season, but, owing to his intemperate habits, had not been successful. Willie's style was crude; but his muscles were hard, and his

lungs sound. Altogether, they did not make a bad pair. After rowing steadily for a couple of miles or so, they passed a boat similar to their own, manned by a powerful-looking fellow with shaven cheeks, and nose much on one side, and a more slightly built man with a black moustache.

"Hullo! where are you pelting to?" shouted the first of these.

Stanley turned his head, and recognizing the speaker, ceased rowing, and allowed the other boat to come alongside.

"It is Dick Lovell, the prize-fighter," he whispered to Willie.

"How are you, Dick?"

"Well, I'm decent; how's yourself?" I ain't seen you down at my crib lately. Not been using your mauleys much, eh?"

"I have not touched the gloves for more than a month," replied Stanley.

"I have got a slap-up set in there," said the other, pointing to a carpet-bag. "I am going to give a gent a lesson at Putney; and as my chum wanted a paddle, I thought I might as well row down as any other way. We'll give you a bit of a spurt if you're game."

"All right!" said Stanley bending to his oar. "One, two, three, off."

Away they went; the fighting man's boat a little in advance.

"Put your back into it, Trawers! We must not let those cads beat us."

"Not if I can help it," returned Willie, between his teeth, pulling with all his strength.

The race was a hollow one. The "cads," as Stanley termed them, were soon passed and distanced; and the winners rowed quietly on to a tavern by the water side, where they landed.

"Bitter beer suggests itself mutually to our imaginations," said Stanley as they entered the parlour.

Willie allowing that he had conceived the idea, the beverage was ordered, and was fast disappearing when they were joined by their competitors, the prize-fighter and his friend.

"Well, Dick, you found us too much for you?" said Stanley, smiling.

"What are you going to stand, after giving us such a drubbing?" said the other, with a grin.

"What will you take?"

"I'll have a drop of something short myself, and my friend here generally drinks Old Tom, cold."

Translating these requirements into a glass of rum and some gin-and-water, Stanley gave his orders, and the liquids soon appeared.

"You licks me at rowing," said the boxer, seating himself amicably, and lighting his pipe; "but you can't get over me with these;" and he touched the carpet-bag significantly.

"No. There, Dick, you are the better man, I allow," said Stanley.

"Do you spar at all?" he asked, turning to Willie.

"A little. I am not very skilful; but I don't mind a hard knock or two."

"I like to see a fellow take them without talking of what he can do," said the man with the moustache, offensively.

"So I would!" retorted Willie, his eyes flashing, "and give too, if I were able."

"There, there; don't lose your temper, young gentleman," said the man with an irritating sneer. "I dare say you are no more of a coward than most young swells."

"Perhaps you would like to try me!" exclaimed Willie, jumping up in a towering passion.

"Well, I don't mind," drawled the other coolly.

"Dick, lend us your gloves for a few minutes."

"Don't lend them, Dick," begged Stanley, who saw the man was a professed bully; "please don't, to oblige me."

"Yes, I *will* have them!" said Willie angrily. I am not going to stand that fellow's confounded impertinence."

"If the gentleman has made up his mind, you see, sir, it's no good my objecting," replied the boxer, who was anxious to see the sport.

Stanley looked annoyed at Willie's persistence, and said nothing further. The gloves were produced, and the combatants, after fitting them on, shook hands, and confronted each other in fighting attitude.

"He don't know much of the noble art, I'll bet a dollar," observed the prize-fighter, as Willie planted himself in a position contrary to all rules of science.

"Smart, that!" he exclaimed with the air of a connoisseur, as the man with the moustache landed his fist heavily on Willie's eye.

"That's pretty, too!" he added, as Willie received a blow in what is technically termed the "mark,"

which doubled him up for the moment with pain and loss of breath.

"I shall stop this," said Stanley, getting up. "Travers is playing wild; he can't touch the other."

"Confound it! what a blackguardly act!" he cried. "How dare you give a boy like that such a cowardly blow?"

The bully, seeing Stanley about to interpose, had hit out spitefully straight from the shoulder, and knocked his antagonist over a chair on to the sanded floor, where he lay partially stunned and bleeding from the mouth and nose.

"He said he didn't mind a hard knock, and I wanted to try him," said the man ironically.

Without answering, Stanley hastened to raise his friend, and wipe the blood from his face. Then ringing the bell, he told the waiter to show them into another room.

The prize-fighter here came forward and apologized. He said it was a darned scurvy trick of his pal's, and he deserved a good hiding for it. Still, he must say, the young gent was a bit bumptious, and dra'd him on.

Stanley cut the apology, such as it was, short, by putting his arm within Willie's, and leaving the room. The latter's appearance improved after a good wash in cold water; and except a swelled nose and unusually puffy lips, he looked himself again.

"How could you be such a fool as to take up the cudgels with such a man as that?" said Stanley, as they were rowing home.

"The fellow insulted me, and I could not stand it.

"My good fellow, if you are to fight every man who insults you, you will have a comfortless life. The other day I was out sculling, and happened to get under the bows of a barge. The bargee called me a vile name, and told me to get out of the way, or he would run me down. If this had happened to you, I suppose you would have clambered up the barge, and done battle with the dirty vagabond. I simply paddled on."

"It is different when a man makes out that you are telling lies," urged Willie.

"The nature of the insult does not matter in the least, as long as it is confined to words. If that blackguard who knocked you down had badgered me instead of you, I should either have told him quietly that he was no acquaintance of mine, and that I did not wish for his conversation, or else I should have held my tongue: this last would perhaps have been the better plan. Why should I be battered about to gratify the cruel instincts of a brute like that, merely because I am angry at his saying, I lie? Much better swallow your wrath, and preserve at the same time your equanimity and your skin. But we won't talk any more. Let us put on the steam, and see what we are made of."

They set to work silently, and pulled "long and strong" the whole way back.

"Bravo, Travers!" said Stanley, approvingly, as he jumped on shore panting for breath. You have better lungs than I, and you only want a little coaching to be a first-rate oar."

"You know the St. Augustin's men have set up a rowing club," he said, as they went home. "Why should not we challenge a couple of their best men? I believe we should beat them, and do honour to our hospital."

Willie highly approving of the proposition, Stanley determined to send the challenge at once, and fix the match for that day week.

"What are you going to do to-night?" he asked.

"I shall work," said Willie, decidedly.

"You won't come to the theatre? There is a splendid piece on at the Adelphi."

"No; I must read," replied Willie, mustering all his resolution.

"Then *au revoir*. When they accept the challenge, I will look you up."

Not a little proud of the strength of mind that he had displayed, Willie walked home to his lodgings. As he entered St. John's Street, he met Wilson, who greeted him cordially, and asked why he had been absent from the hospital during the last few days. Willie replied coldly that he had had other engagements.

"What on earth have you done to your nose?" exclaimed Wilson, catching sight of Willie's nasal organ, enlarged and glassy.

"I have had a blow," answered Willie shortly, and in a tone of voice that forbade further qnestioning.

Wilson looked puzzled, but said in a friendly way, "I suppose we shall meet in the wards to-morrow morning?"

Willie thought it probable, but could not say for

certain; bowed distantly and passed on, leaving the other to wonder at the sudden change of manner in one whom he was disposed to regard as a friend. Willie remembered the false witness that he imagined had been borne against Stanley, and could not forgive it. "Stanley," he thought, "may, as he owns, get jolly occasionally, like scores of others who pretend to be better men; but as to his being a regular drunkard like Stevens—the idea is absurd!"

And yet it was true, however ridiculous it might appear to Willie. Stanley had a strong head, and could drink a great deal without showing its effects. He had also a good constitution, and took plenty of athletic exercise; so that, notwithstanding his excesses, his health did not appear to suffer; but there was scarcely a night that he went to bed sober, and slowly but surely he was wearing himself out.

Willie found his mind too unsettled to read much that evening. Thoughts of the past morning and the forthcoming race would intrude upon the chemical symbols on which he was trying to fix his attention. Moreover, feeling sleepy and tired after his rowing exertions, he yielded to his inclination, and went early to bed.

The next morning Stanley called, and said that he had paid a visit to St. Augustin's on the previous evening, given the challenge in person, received an acceptance, and the match was to take place, as proposed, in a week's time.

"Now, Travers," he continued, "I hate to be beaten in anything that I undertake; therefore, I don't intend to lose this race. I am in shocking con-

dition, owing to late hours and bachelor nights, so I propose to go into moderate training for the next few days. I shall knock off wine, spirits, and tobacco, and take very little beer; and I advise you to do the same."

Willie readily promising to do so, he went on. "We can't run a mile before breakfast in these confounded streets, and Lambeth is a long way to go twice a-day for a pull; so I propose that we go up the river early every morning, get a boat at Wyld's and pull down to the tavern where we hung out yesterday. Let us make that our head-quarters for the day, and come back to town each evening. In this way we can have as much rowing and running as we please, and get more oxygen into our lungs than we could in London. What do you say to my plan?"

"That it is a capital one, and I vote for beginning at once, for we have no time to lose."

The week passed as intended; abstinence and exercise being rigidly adhered to. Stanley found the *régime* very irksome, but his pride enabled him to persevere. As for Willie, he enjoyed himself amazingly.

The day of the race found them both in good health, high spirits, and confident of success. At the appointed time a number of students arrived; some from St. John's and others from St. Augustin's; and soon the boating representatives of the latter hospital rowed leisurely up. After tossing for places and a little preliminary paddling, the rival boats got into a line and prepared to start. In appearance the competitors seemed pretty equally matched. The

St. John's men were of slighter build than their opponents; but their arms, bare to the shoulder, spoke of vigour and wire. The course was ordered so that the starting place should be also the winning post. A boat was anchored a mile up the river, and round this the racers had to turn and row back to the goal. This arrangement was for the benefit of lookers-on, who could thus see the whole race without the fatigue of running along the banks, which they would have been obliged to do had the course been a straight one.

It was the first race that Willie had ever engaged in, and he looked pale and nervous. He expanded his lips feebly as Stanley encouraged him, but the action was so totally devoid of expression that it might more correctly be termed a muscular movement than a smile.

The next moment four stalwart frames bent forward, four oars clove the water, and they were off!

"Bravo, White!" "Give it her, Blue!" shouted the spectators. White, the St. John's colours, were a little ahead; and the superiority of Stanley's masterly stroke over that of his antagonists was evident to all. Willie kept splendid time and rowed well. White increased her lead up to the turning point, and after rounding it was a good distance in advance. Then came the pull home. Something was going wrong with White, for she flagged; and Blue was slowly creeping up. Now, as they neared the goal Blue was almost level. Then came the final struggle. White concentrated her failing strength into one Herculean effort; kept her place, and—won.

Stanley's face was livid, and his lips bloodless. He was lifted out of the boat, and lay gasping like a dying trout. Willie also breathed with difficulty, but looked better than his friend. The losers seemed nearly as fresh as before the race began.

"Another twenty yards, Stanley," said one of these who had pulled stroke—a fine sun-browned fellow with a clear bright eye—"and we should have been the winners instead of you!"

"You are right, Evans," replied Stanley, still panting for breath; "I was completely done up. That last spurt was my expiring struggle: I could not have held my oar another boat's length. You and Johnson must be in good training," he added, "for you have not turned a hair."

"I am a teetotaler," returned the other, "and no smoker; therefore, as I take plenty of exercise, I am always in fair condition. Johnson has had a running match lately, and trained hard for it; so that he also is in good trim."

After receiving the overwhelming congratulations of their friends, the victors managed to get away to dress; having arranged to meet their opponents at Simpson's to celebrate the race by a good dinner. As soon as they were alone, Stanley, declaring that his exhausted energies could only be revived by cold brandy and water, ordered and imbibed two brimming tumblers of the same; whilst Willie, declining an invitation to do likewise, confined himself discreetly to lemonade.

At the time appointed the four young men met; and after dining jovially, repaired to Stanley's rooms

to spend the evening and taste a mint julep, which the above gentleman had the art of compounding after a very particular and approved fashion, — Evans, though a teetotaler, accompanying the others for the sake, as he told them, of their agreeable society.

"We were very near losing that race," observed Stanley, making rapid inroads on the julep that he had just concocted.

"Purely because we were in superior training," replied Johnson. "You are infinitely better rowers than we are."

"You should turn abstainers like myself," said Evans, "and then, if we were impudent enough to return your challenge, you would walk over the course."

"What are your reasons for abstaining," asked Willie. "I suppose it is not wholly for the sake of keeping in good rowing trim."

"Certainly not," answered Evans, laughing. "My reasons are many. I will tell you some of them. Health is an object of my care, and alcohol is a poison which undermines health. As shown by experiment: a drop of alcohol caused in the stomach of a dog a bright red inflammatory spot. What is true of the animal, is true of the human being. Each dram taken sets up inflammation."

"But there are few people in the habit of taking neat spirits," said Willie. "I want to know what harm there is taking diluted alcohol, such as beer and wine, in moderate quantity."

"Alcohol, either concentrated or mixed with water,

coagulates albumen; it therefore hardens and condenses meat, and renders it difficult to digest. It precipitates the active principle of the gastric juice, and therefore completely arrests digestion. Food taken with wine or beer cannot be acted upon at all until these fluids are absorbed; for the stomach secretion is spoilt by them as fast as it is made. It diminishes the power of resisting cold, as has been well shown by experiments in the Arctic Regions. It promotes an excess of fibrine and red corpuscles in the blood, which is an evident deterioration, tending to inflammation or imperfect nutrition. It keeps the blood more or less venous, by taking away the oxygen for its own combustion, which would otherwise be expended in consuming the waste material of the body; this being allowed to accumulate acts as a poison, and cannot be got rid of until the spirit is burnt out. It gives strength neither to body nor mind. It stimulates tired muscles for a time, but afterwards leaves them more exhausted than they were before; and although it momentarily produces a quickness of thought, yet the next instant it deadens the perceptions and clouds the reasoning powers.

These are some of the physiological reasons for my abstinence; and, if you have studied the subject, you must allow that my assertions are true. I am not, however, an abstainer from theory, but from practical experience. I have tried abstinence, and I have tried moderation, and I find the one vastly superior to the other. You fellows, after that delicious julep, will come down to breakfast to-morrow morning with

white tongues and no appetites. I shall actually wake hungry—shall leave my bedroom with visions of cold beef or mutton chops, and sit down to table and play a schoolboy's knife and fork. You and I go out to dinner. You take, perhaps, sherry, hock, champagne, and port. I take water. You get indigestion, and I don't. After dinner we have a scientific argument, and, supposing your intellect not greatly superior to mine, I floor you completely. My reasoning powers are clear. Yours are muddled with drink. I enjoy simple food; can relish a piece of dry bread, and have a child's fondness for sweet things. You crave mouldy cheese, high game, olives, and shellfish. I can eat my beef without mustard, my peas without pepper, and my puddings without spice. You must have your dishes piquant with sauces, sour with pickles, or hot with cayenne. Whose stomach is likely to be sound the longer, yours or mine? I can sit down to my studies directly after dinner, with my head as clear as before the meal. You must have a nap or a short walk, or half an hour's chat before you can do anything, and often you cannot work until you have had your tea. If you and I have the same means, I can afford a better dinner than you can, for I spend nothing on drink. If we are travelling, my hotel bill will be far less than yours, for wines are the items out of which the largest profits are made. Your pint of wine or glass of grog leads you, in conversation, to unwise confidences, and to saying many things that you afterwards regret. You thus tell your love, relate your blunders, or show your productions in verse or prose to a sarcastic friend who chaffs you

unmercifully ever after. It may cause you—for it has many a man—to propose to a girl who will make you miserable for life. It may induce you, in a fit of anger, to turn away a valued servant for a trifling offence, or it may make you quarrel with a dear friend who has told you a disagreeable truth.

"I must confess," said Willie, "that what you say is very true. Drinking, even in moderation, is attended by evils, and abstinence offers great advantages. If I were able, I would take to water, but I have not strength of mind."

"The great difficulty lies in the commencement," replied Evans. "Get over the first week, and you will be pretty safe. After this time the inclination for stimulants wears off, and you would soon feel an actual distaste for them. For my own part, I am certain that a glass of bitter beer would be about as agreeable to me as a draught of quinine."

"Come, Evans," said Stanley, who had been fidgeting in his chair during this conversation, "drop the temperance question for to-night, old fellow. It makes one feel such a sinner to be sucking up julep during your dissertation. Listen to me, and I will give you a song."

After this the evening passed in singing, anecdote, and gossip, until, Evans taking his leave, there was a general move. Willie walked home rather unsteadily, inserted his latch-key, after several unsuccessful attempts, and undressing without a candle, tumbled awkwardly into bed.

CHAPTER IX.

A YOUNG LADY ENDEAVOURS TO CONVERT A SCEPTIC, AND A YOUNG GENTLEMAN COMES HOME DRUNK.

"I AM thinking, Stanley, of going home to-morrow," said Willie, on the following Friday. It will be exactly a fortnight since I was at Crofton last, and my people like to see me as often as they can."

"I should uncommonly like to have a day in the country with you," said Stanley. "Will you let me accompany you?"

"With all my heart, if you don't mind my sister being with us. I can't desert her, because she looks forward so to seeing me, and would be hurt if I did not give her my whole time."

"My good fellow, I should delight in your sister's society; I am only afraid that I shall be in the way." Willie declaring that such would not be the case, it was arranged that they should start the next morning directly after breakfast, so as to have a long day. Pleased indeed was Edith when the young men arrived; delighted to see her brother again, though a little chagrined at the sight of his companion; for she wanted to have Willie all to herself. Stanley, as he looked at her, thought he had never seen any-

thing so lovely. She had been often in his thoughts since his first introduction; his friendship for her brother was more for the sister's sake than for Willie's own fascinations; and his reason for coming to-day was purely the hope of knowing more of her who had so interested him. Mr. Travers was away from home, and would not return for a couple of days, much to Willie's satisfaction; for his conscience reproached him for his life of late, and he had a wholesome dread of his uncle's penetration.

The country looked charming. The meadows were fresh and green, and even the leafless trees—as if ashamed of their dejected appearance when all nature was smiling—tried to brush up a bit under the cheering sun; and, allowing its rays to change the dew drops on their barren branches into sparkling diamonds, offered them to beholders as an apology for leaves.

"If a man could make love anywhere," thought Stanley, "this is the place;" and, had his wish of that moment been realised, Willie and the Antipodes would have been closely allied. Little did he think how soon he and his fair companion would be engaged in a *tête à tête;* yet so it fell out. Willie encountered an old school-fellow, his particular crony, who resided nominally at Crofton, but had been absent for some years; and who, moreover, had just got a commission in the army, and was off to India. So, begging Stanley to excuse him for a short time, and to take care of his sister, he hurried off to talk over old times with his friend. Stanley was nervous at the suddenness of his opportunities; and was thinking

how he could lead the conversation into a tender groove, when Edith startled him by saying, "Mr. Stanley, I want you to tell me a little about my brother. He says that you are his great friend, and therefore you must know most about him. Is he happy, do you think? He seems to me to look care-worn since he went to the hospital, as though he had found sorrow there. Has anything that you know of occurred to grieve him?"

"Nothing, I assure you, that I am aware of. Your brother, I suppose, like all of us, has little troubles."

"Has he any bad companions? Willie would only tell me not to worry myself if I asked him these questions; so I want you to answer me, if you will be so good."

"I don't know who are his other friends; he is generally with me; but I, Miss Travers, am not good; if that is what you mean."

"I don't understand you," said Edith hesitatingly." "In what way are you not good?"

"And by my answer you can judge if I am a fit associate for your brother," added Stanley.

Edith did indeed wish to find out his character for this reason, and she blushed as she found herself detected.

"I never play the hypocrite," said Stanley; "so as you ask me in what way I am bad, I tell you plainly that I am not religious. I have seen—if you will excuse my rudeness—so many fooleries amongst religious people, that I am disgusted with Christianity. May I ask," he added abruptly, "if you are High or Low Church?"

"I don't think that I am either," replied Edith. "I know little of church matters, or the disputes of different parties. I have not read any prayers that I like so well as those in the prayer-book of the Church of England; and I am never tired of them. I like good music, and devotional attitudes. I don't think it right to go to balls and theatres, because I cannot say my prayers so well after them when I get home. I do not think myself elected to be saved; but I hope that if I try to lead a good life, God will forgive my sins through Jesus, and take me up to heaven."

"If all professed Christians were like you, I could not but admire them; but the question that I have just asked you, I put some time ago to a young lady of my acquaintance, and received a different kind of answer. She replied unhesitatingly that she was High Church, very high! I enquired what she understood by the phrase, and found that she had scarcely a notion of the opinions of her party; and when I asked the reasons that induced her to become 'high,' she simply replied that it was 'so nice!' and with this lucid explanation I was obliged to be content."

"I know that there are people of this description," said Edith, "and I fear that they will be severely judged at the last day. A rigid observance of attitude and formalities without the least religion in the heart, is a mockery of Christ that vies with the crown of thorns and the purple robe.

"But because a few are wicked and frivolous, you must not condemn all."

"I do not. I blame no man for a careful observance of ceremonies from an honest conviction that they are right. I know that many High Churchmen devote themselves nobly to doing good; but I think that these young misses do great damage to their cause. But there are other things than this, which make me sarcastic on religion. People make distinctions between right and wrong, that are illogical and inconsistent. For instance, religious persons will not read books or papers of a secular character upon Sundays, because, I suppose, they consider the Sabbath a day to be kept holy, and that worldly matters ought to be excluded. They are horrified at reading a story; yet will listen with pleasure to an after-dinner anecdote. Whilst the gossip of a novel seems a moral poison, they greedily suck up a bit of scandal. To trace the course of true love as depicted in a bound volume, is a great offence; but a little practical flirtation after evening church is irreproachable. It is a sin to read a punning burlesque; but you may play upon words yourself *ad libitum*, and laugh at the wit of others. You may not read a comic journal, but you may tell as many jokes and riddles as you please. Books of science and politics are barred; but there is nothing to hinder you from talking of the Atlantic cable or the Danish question. This sort of thing, Miss Travers, I call humbug. What we may not read, we may not talk of; and I don't think you are able to controvert my position."

"I shall not attempt to do so, for I think you are right. Worldly books should certainly never be read on Sundays, and we ought to converse as much

as possible upon subjects that improve the soul. But surely, Mr. Stanley, you don't give up religion because you meet religious people who are not free from sin! You must have other reasons; or perhaps doubts? Do you believe the whole of the Bible?"

"I fear that I shall sink very low in your estimation when I tell you that I believe none of it."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed Edith. "Oh Mr. Stanley!" she added imploringly: "do let me try to help you to believe. Tell me your doubts; perhaps I can remove them if God will give me words."

"I can scarcely give you an epitome of Colenso and the Essays and Reviews, and I should not like to disgust you by quoting Paine or Carlile."

"I know Colenso's work," said Edith; "we have it at home; and I have dipped into it, though I could not understand it much. But surely his objections would not take away your faith. You have only one thing to believe, and that is that Jesus is the Son of God. Some time ago Satan tempted me to doubt something that I read in the New Testament. It made me wretched; and I brooded over it until I fancied the whole Gospel might not be true. In my despair, I went to my uncle and confided in him. He lent me some books of argument, and a big commentary; and advised me to find an answer to one question, 'Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead?' He told me to read everything that bore upon this; to think over it with all my mind, and to pray earnestly to be taught the truth: 'and when,' he said, 'you have come to the conclusion that the resurrection is a fact, you have learnt the whole of

faith. If Jesus, after being three days in the grave, came to life of his own accord, was seen and handled by his disciples, ate and drank with them, and afterwards in their presence ascended up into heaven —if this is true, it is easy to believe that all the rest is true; his miracles, his sinlessness, his great love for us—oh! Mr. Stanley, Jesus did rise from the dead; I know it, I am sure of it, I am indeed. He will give me, when I die, eternal life; and if you will only have faith in Him, He will give the same to you."

"Tell me how you were convinced of the truth of the resurrection," said Stanley, gazing with admiration at Edith's beautiful eyes, that in her earnestness were full of tears.

"The argument that struck me most was this. Jesus, you know, was laid in a tomb hewn out of solid rock. Its entrance was closed by a great stone, and guarded by sixty soldiers. Now, either Jesus rose again, or His body remained in the sepulchre after the third day, or it had been taken away. The Jews asked for the guard, 'because this deceiver said that he would rise again the third day.' During those three days they wanted to make sure of the body. If it had been in the sepulchre after that time they would have dragged it out, shown it publicly, and undeceived all his disciples. They did not do this, or the apostles would not have had the face to preach their Master's resurrection only fifty days after his death, and in the very place where He died. So, you see, the body could not have been in the tomb, or the Jews would have made use of it.

Then you will say it must have been stolen. This seems impossible; for it is not likely that the disciples, who were so timid as to run away from our Lord when he was taken in the garden, should undertake to creep through a band of armed men, in the light of a full moon, roll back a great block of stone, and carry off the body. They would not have ventured to attempt such a thing, and they could not possibly have succeeded if they had. It is improbable that sixty men would all have been fast asleep; and if they had been, the noise made in wrenching away the big stone must have disturbed them. If the body, then, had not been stolen and yet was gone, Jesus must have risen as he promised. But to me, without thinking of the probability of the resurrection, it seems impossible to doubt the apostles' word. They declared that our Lord had risen, and I don't see how any one can disbelieve them; because such holy men, who led such pure lives, and suffered all sorts of trials and tortures in support of their faith, would not have undergone all this for what they knew to be an imposture. If one were so disposed, it is absurd to think that numbers should be equally mad; and so many false witnesses must have been extremely clever to avoid contradicting themselves or each other in the slightest degree, and to be able to impose upon the whole world without being detected; and everybody must have been remarkably credulous to be deceived by the story of poor ignorant men. I think you must be convinced that the disciples could not be deceivers; and they could not possibly have been themselves deceived. The five

hundred men who saw our risen Lord could not all have lost their senses; and the eleven apostles could scarcely have imagined that they ate and drank with Him. If, then, they were neither deceivers nor deceived, the story must be true. These, Mr. Stanley, are the arguments that convinced my understanding; but that alone would have done me no good. I could not say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost; and this God gave me in answer to my prayers."

Stanley was more affected than he liked to own. He tried to hide his feelings by complimenting his companion on her memory and reasoning powers, but the attempt was feeble, and Edith, with inward joy, saw that her arrow had gone home.

"I will think over your argument," he said, "when I am at leisure. At present my belief in Jesus goes as far as this. He was the best man that ever existed, the most benevolent, self-sacrificing, and upright; but he was nothing beyond this; he was merely man."

"You give him credit for being good?" asked Edith, looking up in surprise.

"I think most sceptics do that," he answered. "His life was wonderfully holy; that no one can deny."

"Do you believe in a future state of reward and punishment?"

"I do. I think that if we act honourably and charitably in this life we shall be rewarded hereafter, without reference to any creed."

"That means that if we act virtuously we shall go to heaven; does it not?"

"Yes; such is my belief."

"Then," returned Edith; "if the most holy man who ever lived was Jesus; surely he has gone to heaven! But do you think that God would admit there one who had dared blasphemously to counterfeit Deity itself? If Jesus were not the Son of God, his whole life was one shocking falsehood; and though it seems dreadful to imagine such a thing, he himself must have been an accomplished hypocrite. But you tell me that you own his goodness, and therefore he must have gone to heaven, and is what he declared himself to be, the Son of God."

"Really, Miss Travers, you ought to have been a man, with your genius for debate," said Stanley, annoyed at being so fairly silenced by a girl.

"Please, don't be sarcastic," said Edith, beseechingly. "God is helping me, and I am trying with all my strength to do you good. Will you bear with me a little longer; I want to ask you if you are ever alone, idle, with time to think?"

"Very seldom; I am not fond of my own society: of course I am often by myself, but then I am usually employed in reading or writing. I don't often meditate; it does not suit my nature; I should get the blues."

"I thought so; I cannot imagine any one irreligious who thinks much; his future must seem so awful, and death so full of fear, that he could not live with such dreadful expectations hanging over him."

"Whenever I think of these things," said Stanley, "I console myself with the doctrine of predestination.

God knows if I am to be saved or damned, and no efforts of mine will alter my destiny."

"I know that predestination is a difficult subject," replied Edith, "for I puzzled my head about it once till I got quite giddy; but a little story that I read put my mind at ease. A great preacher visited a poor old woman, who had got the notion of predestination into her head, and thought that she was not responsible for what she did. God knew, she said, when she was born, if her life would be good or bad; and so she could not help herself if she sinned. The clergyman happened to see through the window a woman going towards the pump in the court-yard with a kettle in her hand. 'What is that person going to do?' he asked. 'Why, she is going to fill her kettle with water, to be sure,' replied the old woman. 'Does your knowledge that she is going to do this make her do it?' he asked. Of course it did not; and, though God knows everything that you will do in future, his omniscience does not cause your actions. But here is Willie coming back—Mr. Stanley, pray for the Holy Spirit. Unless it be given you, you never can believe. God is very pitiful and of tender mercy, and he has promised to bestow it upon all who ask."

"What is Edith holding forth so earnestly about?" asked Willie, looking at his sister in surprise.

Edith seemed embarrassed and did not answer.

Stanley hastened to the rescue, and said—"Your sister has been telling me an anecdote; that is all."

It must have been a very pathetic one, Willie

thought, to bring tears into his friend's eyes. He saw that something was wrong, and forbore further questioning.

Stanley was silent and thoughtful during the rest of the morning; and refused Edith's invitation to dinner, on the plea of a previous engagement which obliged him to return to town. Willie was prevailed upon to remain till Monday; and, having escorted Edith home, left her to accompany his friend to the station.

"I am dying for something to drink," said Stanley, as they passed a public-house, "my spirits have somehow sunk below zero, and must be elevated. Come in and have something also, there's a good fellow."

Edith sat at home waiting dinner, but Willie did not return. Half an hour passed, and she had to dine cheerlessly alone, wondering what could have kept her brother. Hour after hour went by, and still he did not appear.

"He has broken his promise to me, and gone back to London," she thought; and, as eleven o'clock struck, she lit her candle and went sorrowfully to bed.

Two hours after a loud knock at the street door startled her from sleep. She got up trembling, opened her window, looked out, and by the light of a lamp opposite, saw Willie leaning against the area rails. The servants seemed not to have heard the knock, for there was no one stirring within the house. Edith wrapped herself in her dressing gown, crept down stairs, drew back the bolts, and opened the door. A gust of cold wind made her shrink back, and nearly

blew the candle out. No one entered. She put out her head and called, "Willie, Willie."

"All right," responded a voice so harsh that she hardly recognized it; and then the door was pushed back so violently that it almost knocked her down, and her brother reeled in, nearly dead drunk.

His hat was pulled on one side, his hair hung over his bloodshot eyes, and he regarded his sister with an idiotic stare. Then he made a lurch forward, and tried to grasp her dressing-gown. The poor girl, who had been gazing at him as if fascinated with horror, here fairly turned and fled. Willie went a step or so in pursuit, but stumbled and fell to the ground, where he lay helpless, like a heap of clothes. Edith, as soon as she saw him fall, lost all personal fear in anxiety for his safety. She rushed to his assistance, and was agonised to find him looking like a dead man. After rapidly opening his shirt collar, she ran upstairs for some water, dashed it over his face, and after some minutes of fearful suspense, his consciousness returned. Speechless, and with averted face, she waited by his side until he endeavoured to rise; and then, after assisting him to regain his feet, she led him with great difficulty up the stairs to his bedroom, helped him on to the bed, wrapped the blankets round him, and went back to her own room. Many times that night a ghostly figure with bare feet, long hair, and white night dress, stood by Willie's side.

It was Edith, keeping watch like a good angel over the senseless thing she loved.

When he awoke in the morning groaning with

thirst, he found his sister sitting by him; and turning away his head, he said crossly, "What do you want here, Edith? I wish you would go."

"Don't be angry," she said gently; "you are ill, and I am taking care of you. Can I get you anything?"

"You may get me some water, if you like," he replied ungraciously.

Edith left the room, and soon returned with fresh water and some lemons. "I thought you might like lemonade better," she said.

"He was silent; so she set to work, and with lemon juice, soda, and sugar, made him a cool effervescing draught. Then she brought lavender water, and bathed his burning temples, and fanned them gratefully.

Willie could remain hard no longer; he put his arms round her neck, drew her face down to his, and kissed her tenderly.

"My darling, darling Edith," he said tremulously, "how can you bear to look at me! Edith, I am a beast and no man. I am lost, degraded. My pure, my innocent sister, you are not fit to be with such as I!"

"Willie, dearest Willie, don't speak like that. It hurts me; I cannot bear it. You are my own, my only brother, whom I love best in all the world."

"Was it you last night who——"

"Yes, dear, it was I, only I. No one else knows," she said, soothingly. "And now undress and get comfortably to bed, whilst I go down and fetch your breakfast."

"He could eat nothing, but lay tossing feverishly from side to side. Edith brought her hymn-book, and in a low, sweet voice sang some verses that he used to love, until she hushed him like a child to sleep."

CHAPTER X.

A CASE OF DELIRIUM TREMENS, AND AN AWFUL SCENE.

WHILST Willie was suffering from the effects of his debauch, Stanley was in his rooms alone, wrapped in profound thought.

"What a cursed fool I was," he muttered, "to let Travers have so much last night! I had not a notion that he was so far gone. He seemed to turn drunk all of a sudden. After talking one moment like a rational being, the next he was offering to fight every creature whom he saw. I wonder who let him in after I had knocked at the door and propped him up against the rails. I trust that sweet girl didn't see him, the sight would half kill her.

"What a walk I had home afterwards! I thought I should never get to the end of it; my legs are as stiff as broomsticks to-day.

"Heigho, Edith! You have made me thoroughly miserable. How beautiful she looked in her endeavours to convert me! Her cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkled as she argued! And when she begged me to pray, with that pearly drop of earnestness trickling down her face—for the moment I was quite unmanned!

"Her proof of the resurrection, I confess, seemed

most convincing; I dare not think of it. If the Bible should be true, what an eternity is mine! I would give the world to turn religious, but I can't. A good Christian has the best of it in every way. He has none of those dreadful sinkings about the heart, such as drink is punishing me with now; no feverish headaches, and loathings at the sight of food; no pestering duns and angry fathers; and none of the remorse which follows a life wasted in dissipation.

"It is true indeed that one's sins in this world find one out, and that the man who avoids them has the smoothest time of it. Hang it! if the Bible is false, a Christian loses nothing by thinking it true! He gains by the peace of mind he gets in life, by sticking to its rules. But if it turns out after all to be true, what do I lose by not believing it! Ah, Edith! if I could live with you, I should be an altered man. You would make me good in spite of myself. But there—it is no good thinking of impossibilities—as if she would marry an infidel and a drunkard! Yes, I am a drunkard; why can't I get rid of this beastly habit! It is this blackguard profession that has made me what I am. I never cared for drink until I came to London. If my father had not forced me into a line of life that I detest, I should not have sunk so low as I have now. I hate medicine, and all connected with it; and I look forward to my future life with dread. If it were not for the consolation of drink, I should take her Majesty's shilling to-morrow, and get sent to India. If Edith were my wife, I could bear anything; I would shrink from no kind of work with her to cheer me on; but alone, I care not what becomes of

me; I am going to the dogs fast, and I shan't try to stop myself."

Here the servant entered the room with a note. It was from the landlady of the house where Stevens lodged; and contained an urgent request that Stanley would visit her lodger, who was in a dreadful state with *delirium tremens*. The letter stated that he had not slept for several nights, and during the whole time had been raving mad. She—the landlady—had not sent to the hospital for a doctor, for fear of exposing her young gentleman; but he was now so bad that she feared he would die.

After reading this communication, Stanley instantly set out for Stevens' quarters. He found his unfortunate friend in bed, his face pale, and covered with sweat, his eyes restlessly roving about the room, his hands trembling, and always on the move. Entering the room noiselessly, Stanley had escaped his observation at first; and for some time he lay quiet, twining and untwining his fingers, twisting the corners of the sheet round and round, and picking at the excrescences of the quilt. Presently he bent his head down, and looked suspiciously under the bed.

"There it is!" he cried, starting back in horror; "wriggling its body along the ground, and leaving a slimy track behind. It is climbing up the bed! Look! Look! it is on the pillow! It has crawled between the sheets! Hah! knock it off! Smash it! It is coiling round my leg!" and the poor wretch leapt out of bed shivering in every limb. By a mixture of persuasion and force, he was induced to lie down again, and then the sight of Stanley turned

his thoughts in another direction. He thought himself at a convivial party. "More punch," he said eagerly; "I want more punch. Who says I have had enough? I can drink you all under the table, and you know it. I am not drunk; hear me whistle 'Rule Britannia.' There! as if a man who was tight could do that! You are drunk, Stanley, only you are too shy to show it; you won't talk because you know you can't speak distinctly. Give you a song, did you say? I shall be most happy. Here's one of my comic ones;" and in a shrill weak voice he piped out a low composition, which turned Stanley sick to hear.

"Ah! you are right," he rambled on; "it's a mistake to lush in the morning: better keep yourself fresh for the night. Early drinks play the devil with a fellow; you stand liquor better than I do; I began too soon, and hacked my constitution up; even at school I used to get as tight as a drum. The first time that I ever got screwed, was in going home for the holidays. There were a lot of us in the railway carriage; and we had port wine, rum shrub, and Scotch ale. I was so done up by the time I got home, that when the Dad shook hands and asked me how I was, I laughed in his face, and told him I was d——d drunk."

Here Stanley drew the landlady aside, and told her that he could not undertake the responsibility of prescribing for his friend; and that she had better send at once for the house-physician of the hospital.

"Stanley!" said Stevens, when they were alone, "look, there, on the right of the looking-glass; do

you see the old hag's face poked through the wall? Isn't she fearful? Look! She has thrust her skinny arm through, and is staring at me and beckoning!"

"She shan't annoy you," said Stanley soothingly; "I will push her away. There! She has gone!" he said, hitting the part of the wall that Stevens had indicated.

"I wish you would catch some of those flies, too; the whole room is dark with them; they are buzzing about in thousands; your face is covered with them: keep your mouth shut, or they will crawl in!"

Stanley quieted him as well as he could, and the house-physician arriving soon after, administered some brandy, and a large dose of morphia.

"You had better telegraph at once for his father," he said; "and also hire a proper nurse, for the patient must not be left."

Feeling intensely relieved at getting away, Stanley soon sent the telegram, and found a nurse. He afterwards went home to his rooms; sat down a few minutes, buried in thought; then went to the nearest public-house, bought a bottle of brandy, smuggled it home under his coat, locked himself in his room, and drank till he tumbled senseless on the floor. Such were the effects that the late terrible warning produced on him! He had never before intoxicated himself alone; this is the last step in the career of drink, and he had taken it.

After the narcotic, Stevens slept a little, and awoke quieter. His father did not arrive until late at night, as he lived at a great distance; and by this time his son had relapsed into his former state, constantly

chattering, suspicious of every one, and seeing in his imagination all sorts of loathsome things. When he caught sight of his father, he exclaimed, "Don't let him come near me! I know what he is going to do! He wants to burn my eyes with a hot iron! He will cure me by counter-irritation, he says. I won't have it done! I won't. It will leave me blind!"

The workings of the poor father's face were painful to witness, as he gazed upon this his only son. Kneeling down by the bedside, he said in a voice of deep emotion, "My poor boy, don't you know me? I am your father. I would not hurt you. I have never hurt you in my life!"

Stevens looked at him suspiciously; and as his father, with hot tears rolling down his cheeks, tried tenderly to take his hand, he shrank back, crying, "Keep him off, I say! His fingers are sneaking up to catch hold of me, and keep me fast."

"You had better come away, sir," said the nurse; "you only irritate him."

The father obeyed. "Will he die?" he asked of the house-physician who had just come in.

"I trust not; he is very ill, but persons don't often die in their first attack. We must get him to sleep if possible; that is the only thing to save him."

More morphia was given, but without effect; and the parent passed a fearful night in the dim chamber, listening to the hideous ravings of his child.

Stanley came no more to see his friend: he had not courage to face again that terrible sick room; but he sent a servant daily to make enquiries; and

the answers he received were not encouraging. In fact, the unhappy patient grew worse and worse. One morning Stevens started up in bed and asked for a fishing-rod. The floor, he said was a river and full of trout. He was so urgent in his demand that the nurse, to pacify him, gave him a walking cane. With this he commenced fishing, as he fancied, over the side of the bed. "Look at that trout!" he exclaimed, in a feeble whisper. "I can't catch him; he is bigger than any of the rest, and comes right under the hook and won't bite. Hush! don't make a noise, I will wade in and nab him!" and he put his legs out of bed and lifted his night-shirt carefully, as if to keep it from the wet. The nurse hurried up, but before she could restrain him he had fallen to the ground, seized his father—who was standing near—by the foot, and exclaiming, "I have caught the d—d thing at last"—expired.

CHAPTER XI.

A DYING BOY, A STARVING FAMILY, A YOUNG THIEF, AND A LECTURE TO COSTERMONGERS.

A FEW mornings after the occurrences related in the last chapter, Ernest received a letter in a lady's handwriting; it ran thus:—

"DEAR MR. GRAHAM,—I have been thinking a great deal of what you told us about the dreadful state of London, and the want of teachers in your schools. I am longing to be of some help, but cannot think what I ought to do. You said that if persons who lived in the suburbs would only come to the city once a week they might do good. I am sure my uncle would let me do that, and would even accompany me himself if he knew that I wished him to do so. I feel dreadfully being idle now I know what good a girl may effect if she will; and I should have written to you before, but I could not get up my courage. It is only after earnest prayer to God that I have mustered resolution to offer you my services; and even now I cannot help dreading your acceptance of them. Still, if you do tell me that I can help, I trust that sufficient strength will be given me to undertake my work, and to persevere in it

when it is begun. If you will be so kind as to advise me in this matter I shall be grateful,

"Yours truly,

"EDITH TRAVERS."

A smile of satisfaction stole over Ernest's face as he read the above. "Thank God!" he said fervently, "for another labourer in His vineyard. May she sow abundantly and reap much fruit!"

After some consideration he wrote to Edith, saying how rejoiced he was at having been the means of gaining her as an assistant in the great work; and telling her that the schools in which he himself taught greatly needed teachers. Could she therefore manage to come to town on Sundays, a class of girls would be put under her tuition at once.

The letter written and despatched, Ernest referred to a list of his engagements for the morning, and set out to fulfil them. After walking some distance in a straight line he turned down a side street, tapped at the door of a dingy little house, and was admitted by a middle-aged woman, poorly but neatly dressed, and having a benevolent expression of face.

"How is your lodger this morning?"

The woman dropped a curtsey, and answered—"Thank you kindly, sir, he's much about the same, —very patient—that he always is—but he don't mend; and what's more, I don't think that he ever will. He has been longing to see you, sir; will you step up stairs."

She preceded him to the sick chamber, and delicately left him alone with the sufferer.

The room was very small, and so low pitched that Ernest could not stand upright. There was little furniture, and that almost worthless; still, all efforts had evidently been made to give an air of comfort to the place. It was orderly and clean; a small fire was burning in the grate; a saucepan, probably containing broth, stood on the hob; a cat lay coiled up asleep upon the mat; and a wooden box containing a few lumps of coal occupied the chimney corner. On the mantelpiece was a glazed figure of Napoleon I. in knee-breeches and cocked-hat; a shaving-glass with a broken frame, and a pair of white mugs, labelled as "presents from Gravesend." Some pictures from the *Illustrated News* were pinned upon the walls, and a few old pieces of carpet of different shades partly covered the floor. The sick boy, a lad of about fourteen, lay upon a small iron bedstead in the corner of the room; his sheets were coarse, but clean; and a faded patchwork quilt partly concealed the ragged blanket that kept him warm. A mug containing barley water and some tracts stood on a chair by the bedside; and a large open bible was turned down upon the bed.

"I am so glad to see you, sir," he exclaimed with beaming eyes. "I knew that you would come to-day, because you promised; and I have been listening to every sound, and thinking it was your step."

"You are no better, my poor boy?" said Ernest tenderly, seating himself at the foot of the bed.

"Oh no, sir, I don't want to be; I am so glad to die—and yet, perhaps I should like to live a little

longer, to be of more use, and show my gratitude to God. Since I joined the Band of Hope, and promised to abstain from intoxicating liquors and to get others to do the same, I have got twenty-three boys to sign; and the woman down stairs—my landlady, used to drink, and I told her some of things that you said, sir—about how happy people were who abstained; what comfortable homes they had, with their children always clean, and enough to eat every day, and a nice bit of baked meat on Sundays; and she was so struck that she went straight off and took the pledge, and has kept it ever since—more than a year—and she says now that she's a happy woman. I don't mean to boast, sir, or to feel satisfied with myself, by telling you these things; but I am so glad to think I have done something to show God that I am thankful."

"Shall I read you some verses from the Bible?" asked Ernest.

"Thank you, sir; if you would be so kind, I should like it very much."

Opening the Bible at Revelations, Ernest read, "I beheld and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters;

and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

A look of ineffable peace came over the boy's countenance as he listened, and when Ernest closed the book, he said, "You remember how I looked when you first met me, sir; I had no shirt, no shoes and stockings, and my trousers were slit up to my knees. Oh, sir, fancy this ragged boy clothed in white, and singing his Redeemer's praises! I almost tremble when I think of it; it seems too good for such as me.

"When you come, sir, I shall be the first at the gate to welcome you. One of the jewels in your crown will be my soul that you have saved. I hardly think I can be quite happy there till you are come; though I am afraid, when you are there, they won't let me see you much. You will be high up—always near Jesus; and I shall be the lowest of all, and only see you at a distance.

"Is it very painful to die, sir?" he asked, after a moment's thought. "I saw a dog die once, and he rolled about with his tongue hanging out, and looked as if he were suffering dreadfully."

"No, my boy; the pain of death need not frighten you. Most probably it will be like falling asleep; you will know nothing about it until you wake up in another world, and find yourself with Jesus."

They talked on thus for some time, and then Ernest knelt down and prayed with the dying boy, and bade him good bye, promising soon to visit him again. From here he walked on quickly through various streets and alleys, until he arrived at a court so narrow that he could touch simultaneously the row

of tumbledown buildings on each side. Some clothes lines—bearing shirts and other nondescript garments—were stretched across from window to window; and groups of almost naked children were playing in the mud. At one of these houses Ernest stopped and entered a room upon the ground floor. Its whitewashed walls were discoloured by damp, the flooring had given way in several places; there was scarcely a whole pane of glass in the windows, and the broken ones were stuffed up with old rags and newspapers, so that when the door was shut the room must have been nearly dark. The only piece of furniture was a large four-post bed with a few dirty rags in place of mattress, and on these lay a wan little girl asleep. There were six other occupants of the room; five more children—the eldest of whom could not have been more than ten—and the mother, a thin, miserable-looking woman, in worn-out shoes exposing her naked toes, and a cotton dress which clung so tightly to her limbs as to make it evident that she was destitute of under-clothing. The eldest child, a boy, had nothing on but a man's overcoat tied round his body by string; the others were dirty and ragged, and all had bare legs and feet.

"I heard of you," said Ernest, addressing himself to the mother, "through the bible-woman who visits these parts. She tells me that you are starving, and I have come to see what I can do to help you. Will you tell me what has brought you to such distress?" The woman told her story—a common one enough, God knows! Her husband, she said, had been a stone-breaker, and died in hospital six months back.

They were badly enough to do whilst he was alive, but since his death they had scarcely managed to live. She had made a few shillings by working for the slop-shops, but they paid very badly, and she had to sit up half the night to earn a crust. The neighbours had been very kind. That bed belonged to a woman in the house—and the landlord was a good man, and let her have the room for nothing. A month ago she ran her needle under her nail, and the finger had swelled and got very bad; and since then a bit of bone had come away. Of course she had been obliged to give up sewing; and how after this she and her children had contrived to keep body and soul together, she could scarcely say. The parish did a little for them, and they had starved on till they were nothing but skin and bone. To-day they had eaten nothing; and yesterday there was a quartern loaf between them all.

After hearing this sad tale, Ernest hastened away, saying that he would be back presently. First, he went to a grocer whom he knew, borrowed a big hand-basket, and bought some tea, sugar, and butter. Next he hurried to a baker's for bread; to an eating-house for some slices of ham and beef; to a pastry-cook's for some jelly, and a mould of soup; and finally he went to a coal shed, and ordered some wood and coals. Then, regardless of appearances, he returned to the poor family with his burden of eatables on his arm; and placing the basket on the floor, took out the bread and meat, and dividing it as well as he could with his penknife, gave to each starving one a share: then he brought the jelly to

the sick child, and watched her eat it, telling her that when the fire came she should have some soup; and having filled the hungry with good things, and made the widow's heart to sing with joy, he took his departure, purposing, as he walked away, to buy a little furniture and clothing, to have the children sent to school, and considering for what situation a woman with a bad finger was eligible. After walking a long distance through muddy, close-smelling streets, he dived into a dark court and entered the "kitchen" of a low lodging-house. Through the dense atmosphere of tobacco smoke he could see a number of most disreputable-looking men and women, lolling about in various attitudes: some were toasting herrings and pieces of bacon at the fire; others were cooking potatoes, and a good many were eating. In the middle of the room a knot of boys were tossing for halfpence, and a ring of elders were looking lazily on. Ernest did not excite so much attention as one would have expected: a few—probably culprits—started up, and looked alarmed at the intrusion; one or two laughed and said—"It's that d—d missionary again!" but most seemed to regard him as a friend, and made way for him respectfully. His eyes wandered round the room as if searching for some one, and presently they lighted upon a lad who was endeavouring to hide himself in a corner behind a shrivelled old woman with a pipe in her mouth. Ernest beckoned, and the boy came slowly up, hanging down his head, and, obeying his look, followed him from the room. After gaining the open street, Ernest said sorrowfully—"You have deeply grieved

me: after all your promises, and my exertions in your behalf, you have run away from your master, and come back to the old haunt. Have you stolen anything since you left."

"A coat, sir," answered the boy, whimpering; "I prigged it from a ready-made shop; it was hanging outside. I am very sorry, sir, but I couldn't stand the other life; it was too confining; I've never been used to indoor work. But indeed, sir, I never touched a thing of master's the whole time I was there!"

"Do you remember what I said would become of you, if you persisted in stealing?"

"I shall go to hell," replied the boy.

"You know this, and yet you will walk in no other path but the one that leads there! You must be mad! Will you not bear a little irksome restraint, to save yourself from eternal misery? Have pity on yourself: do not voluntarily give your body and soul to the devil to be tortured; make some attempt to escape, if it be ever so feeble! Think of the choice that lies before you; honesty, with peace of mind in this life and happiness hereafter; or theft, with repeated imprisonments and daily anxiety—your years probably ending in penal servitude—and Satan with hell-fire awaiting you after death? Now, if I can get you a place as errand-boy, where you will be mostly out of doors, will you faithfully do your best to keep it?"

"I will, sir; I swear to you, I will!" said the boy deeply moved.

"Then come with me at once."

As soon as he had heard of his protegé's desertion, Ernest had made arrangements with a shopkeeper to give him a trial; he told the tradesman of the lad's character, offered to be responsible if he stole anything, and prevailed on the man, who was a good Christian, to engage him. Here, therefore, he took the boy; introduced him to his future master, and, after a few words of advice, left him to redeem the past.

The rest of the day he spent in writing letters soliciting charity for cases of distress, and in attending a meeting on ragged-schools. In the evening he called a cab, and was driven to a low music-hall in one of the worst quarters of London. He had hired this place, which was not in use, for the purpose of giving lessons from the Bible to those of the poor costermongers whom he could induce to attend. Costermongers, as a class, are wholly ignorant on religious matters; they have no creed, attend no place of worship, and have as little knowledge of Christ as the wild tribes of Central Africa. Ernest, in his labours among them, had been astonished at their interest in Scripture pictures. They would ask eagerly, "Who is that?" "What did he do?" and would listen to the answer with great attention. They would see, for instance, a print of St. Paul's vision as he journeyed Damascus, which roused their curiosity. Ernest would then relate the history of St. Paul; what he believed, what dangers and trials he went through in support of his faith: he would then read and explain extracts from his epistles, showing the kind of lessons that he taught; and

would finish by a prayer that his listeners might be persuaded to learn them. Finding that this kind of teaching produced so good an impression, he hired a series of large paintings, illustrating incidents in the New Testament; and having, for a trifling remuneration, procured the loan of the above music-hall, he announced his intention of lecturing there on two nights in the week. To-night, his new plan was to be tried for the first time; and he felt a little nervous as he entered the room.

There were from thirty to forty persons assembled, men, women, and children; they were whistling, "cat-calling," cracking nuts, and sucking oranges, as though they fancied themselves in the gallery of the Victoria Theatre. There was a clapping of hands as Ernest appeared on the platform, and subdued whispering whilst he arranged a picture in front of the stage, and brought a strong light and reflector to bear upon it, so that all could see. Exclamations of, "Ain't it pretty now!" "My eyes! that is a stunner!" "I wonder what it is all about!" were heard on all sides. The representation was that of the sermon on the mount.

"You all know what sin is," Ernest commenced; "and you all have sinned. Now, God abhors sin. He is so pure Himself, that He cannot bear to see the least impurity in us. When he made the first man who ever lived, He gave him all that he could want to make him happy; but He said, if you show yourself ungrateful for what I have given you, and repay my kindness by disobedience, you shall die. The first man did disobey, and his descendants have committed sin

ever since. God could not be unjust; He had said that He would punish, and He must keep his word. Then his only Son took pity upon the world, and offered to be punished in our stead; He offered to become a poor man, to undergo the greatest suffering, and to be put to a cruel death, if God would spare those who should believe Him to be his Son, and who should leave off sinning, and try to lead a holy life. And God, unwilling that those who had offended Him should perish, in his infinite mercy gave his Son to die. He came into the world and was called Jesus: in this picture you see Him on a mountain telling the people what they ought to do. He tells them to be merciful and meek; to be peacemakers, and pure at heart: He tells them to forgive injuries, to return good for evil, and He teaches them how to pray to God. He forbids them to swear, to be revengeful, or to speak uncharitably of their neighbours; and He promises to provide for their wants in this life if they will only trust Him, and think the next world of more importance than this. These were the lessons that He taught. Now let us see the wonders He performed. In order to show that He was sent by God, it was necessary that He should do things which could only be accomplished by God's help. So He commanded the blind to see, and they saw: He told the dead to return to life, and they became again living men: He healed the sick by a word or a touch, made the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. This man in the picture was born blind, and had remained so forty years. At the word of Jesus, the dull, sightless orbs

that had rolled idly in their sockets for so long, suddenly sparkled with intelligence: for the first time in his life, the poor man saw the sun, the trees, and the faces of his fellow-creatures. Afterwards, when he was brought before some great people who would not believe Jesus to be the Son of God, the absurdity of their disbelief quite made him laugh; he asked them who could possibly have given him who had been blind for forty years a useful pair of eyes except one who had the power of God. The next painting shows Jesus bringing back to life a widow's only son. Think of a widow; she has lost him who was bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh; to whom in difficulties she went for counsel, and in trouble for sympathy; her sorrows were his sorrows, and her joys his joys. With him her cares of life were light, for he bore half their burden. Ignorant of the world, his experience shielded her; in weakness he was her strength; he was her lover, her husband, and her dearest friend: he has been taken from her, and she has to fight out life alone. God left to comfort this widow in her bereavement an only son. You all know the depth and strength of a mother's love, and how an only child is idolized: think, then, what must be the widow's feelings towards the one treasure spared her. The babe who in her sight made its first faltering step, in her ear lisped its first word, grows under her watchful care to be a man. Now he supports his mother in her declining years, and advises and consoles her as her husband used to do. He remembers what she was to him when weak and helpless, and now that she is

the feeble one, and he the strong, the man cherishes the old mother as she tended the child. He is stricken by the Almighty, and falls sick. Night and day his mother nurses him; all that love can do she does for him, but she cannot save him, and he dies. You see her following him to his grave: your hearts must guess her agony, for though I can imagine it I cannot put it into words. Jesus, who loves us all better than this widow loved her boy, meets the funeral procession: He gazes pitifully upon the woman in her deep distress, tells the bearers of the coffin to stand still, and says—'Young man, I say unto thee, arise.' The blood, coursing through the cold, damp skin, gives it again the warmth of life. The rigid limbs become pliant, the closed eyes open, the dead sits up and begins to speak, and Jesus delivers him to his mother. By these and similar actions Jesus showed beyond a doubt that He was sent by God, and therefore his teaching must be attended to, and his commandments obeyed. I will now show you a picture of the death of Jesus. Those same great persons who would not accept the miracle of the blind man as a proof that Jesus was the Son of God, accused him falsely to the rulers of the country of trying to make himself a king. He was condemned to death. His enemies ordered some wicked soldiers to beat him with cruel whips until the blood poured from his lacerated back. After they had beaten him, they made a crown of brambles which had long, sharp thorns; this they put upon his head, and pressed it down so that the thorns ran deep into his flesh. Afterwards they led him to the top of

a hill, and nailed his hands and feet to a large cross; then they stood round insulting him until He died. Jesus, if He had chosen, with one word could have killed them all; but He had come into the world to die for our sakes, and so He bore his shame and sufferings patiently, and even prayed his Father to forgive his torturers. As He drew his last breath the light of day disappeared; and for three hours there was a great darkness. The graves of the churchyard opened, and the bodies of some holy men who were buried there rose from their tombs and appeared unto many. God caused these things to happen to show the people the greatness of Him who had just died; but some of them were also to see that death had no power over Him. In three days He was to rise from the dead, appear to those who believed on Him, and go up into heaven before their eyes. In this, the last picture for to-day, you see Him ascend from the midst of his faithful followers. Some future day this same Jesus will come down in glory with thousands of holy angels; He will call you, and me, and all mankind before him, and judge them according to their deeds. Those who have believed Him to be the Son of God, and who have tried with all their might to keep from sin, will be happy for ever and ever; and those who have despised and rejected Him and persevered in wickedness, shall have an eternal life of the most bitter misery."

Ernest then spoke of the beautiful character of our Lord, and of his great love for sinners, and concluded with an exhortation to those present to forsake

their sins and follow Him. The lecture was a success, the most perfect order had prevailed; and whilst the sobs of the women showed unmistakeably that their hearts had been touched, the expression of grave interest on the faces of the men gave hope that they also were not unmoved.

CHAPTER XII.

TROUBLES OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHING; AND A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

ERNEST was surprised the next morning to receive a note from Mr. Travers, engaging to bring his niece to town on the following day (Sunday), and requesting him to meet them at the station and conduct them to the schools. Ernest had not anticipated that Edith would commence her duties immediately, and was pleased at her resolution and prompt decision. The next day, accordingly, he met them as appointed, introduced Edith to the superintendent, and installed her in her new work. A lady living near, who was an old friend, agreed to give her a home for the day; and Mr. Travers, grumbling a good deal at having to spend his Sunday in London, but secretly delighted at his niece's zeal, undertook to bring her home in the evening.

Poor Edith was dreadfully shy at finding herself mistress of twelve little girls; she fancied that the other teachers were watching to see how she succeeded, and that her nervousness must be apparent to all. She felt herself a stranger, and regarded her pupils rather in the light that a new girl at school does those who have already been there a half year; they knew the ways of the place and she did not. The sharp little

things saw that the whip hand was theirs, and sat whispering and giggling: twisting buttons on pieces of cotton to make a buzz; chinking farthings and dropping them on the floor; covering their mouths with both hands to muffle the sound of nut-cracking between their teeth; throwing each others' shoes into the middle of the class and darting from their seats to recover them; pointing at Edith's dress and wondering audibly how much it cost; and in short making themselves the abominable little plagues that unruly children always are.

The superintendent soon came to her assistance, and awed the children into something like order; Edith then for some time met with better success. In telling them of Jesus, she dwelt so touchingly on his love for little children as to draw tears from many of of her hearers; and she was inwardly congratulating herself on the happy change, when the softened looks gradually disappeared, and a grin stood on every face. She was at a loss to account for this phenomenon, until, seeing all eyes fixed in one direction, she turned quickly round, and caught a pug-nosed, saucy-looking child mimicking grotesquely her every movement. The poor girl was now in despair; she tried to pursue her subject, but her words fell flatly and without effect.

"Tell us a story, teacher," suggested the head scholar, a bright-eyed, intelligent girl, rather older than the rest.

"Yes do, please do," echoed the others; "the other teacher always told us a tale after the regular work."

Edith remembered a creation of fancy that she

had lately written as a birthday present for a pet cousin, and thinking that she could tell her own composition better than that of another, begged for silence and began as follows:—

"In a pleasant little cottage in the South of France little Nelly lived with her father and mother. Nelly had reached that time of life when children are supposed by their nurses to be old enough to know better. She was six years old. By saying that she was a pleasant-looking English child, I should perhaps praise her as much as by a long description; but if you would know exactly what she was like I must tell you that she was a fair little thing with merry blue eyes, rosy cheeks, an impudent little pug of a nose, a profusion of light, curly hair, which was always getting into her eyes, and when she stooped hid her face like a curtain, and required shaking back a number of times a day. Such was Nelly in appearance. In character she was a well-disposed, loving little thing, but had the faults of many little ladies of six years old. That is to say, she liked her own way, and sometimes cried when she could not get it; she was fond of sweet things, and often ate more than was good for her; she was indisposed towards bed in the evening, and had a particular aversion to the tub in the morning, and would howl most dismally when the soap got in her eyes. She liked sitting on her papa's knee, and listening to his beautiful stories of wonderful people who had done wonderful things; some of whom were naughty and some good; and the naughty ones had a short season of prosperity, but invariably came to a

shocking end, whilst the good ones had trials and troubles the most dreadful and difficult to bear. But everything came right at last, and they revelled all the rest of their lives in gold, silver, diamonds, and plum cake, and died very happily, blessed with a multitude of children. Nelly would sit and listen with parted lips and widely open eyes, and could not even wink for earnestness, and never doubted in the least that the thrilling incidents were true. But her naughty father invented them all as he went on, and poor Nelly put implicit faith in them, and believed that all was truth and purity, as she was herself. Her hopes and fears, and all the secrets of her baby mind I am unable to describe, for the simple reason that I do not know them. She hoped, I think, when she awoke in the morning that there would be jam for breakfast, and feared lest there should be only bread and butter like last time. She hoped that papa would give her a doll as a birthday present, and feared lest he should buy her a book instead. She hoped when she pulled a toy to pieces, to find something marvellous inside; and feared lest she should be disappointed as she was before. As to the way she passed her time, she did her lessons—what I know not, neither I fear did she. Her commonest occupation was to collect all the chairs of the room into a circle, get into its centre, and imagine herself a grown up woman in a cottage, like mamma. She would have the arm-chair for a door, push it aside, and go out for a walk, and buy articles of food or clothing at the mantelpiece and windows: then she would return, and gravely "open" the arm-chair

with a big key, and bustle about like Marie the maid, dust the chairs with her pocket-handkerchief, scrub the carpet with a headless, limbless doll, and be as active and as full of thought as the best housewife in creation. Sometimes she would get under the table, which had an overhanging cover, and pretend to be a lion in his den, and go forth on hands and knees, roaring in search of prey; find the mutilated doll, take it in her mouth, crawl back to her lair, and growl and bite almost as well as the king of beasts could have done it himself. The greatest treat was to have a grand dinner in her own miniature service; a little fish named *goujon*, to represent a fine turbot; two square inches of roast beef for the joint; a sparrow stuffed and roasted for the game; and a sponge cake or jelly for the last course. On these occasions Nelly sat at the head of the table, and helped imaginary guests with a grand air: then she would eat her own share—taking a long time—and having finished, would collect the plates before the ladies and gentlemen round the table, and quietly demolish the viands herself. On birthdays her papa and mamma dined with her, and would gravely sit with tiny knife and fork over the leg of a sparrow, whilst Nelly, proud and delighted, did the honours of the feast. But perhaps the thing that pleased her most was to visit an old Frenchman who lived at the foot of the mountain close by; a little wizened old fellow, who had served in the wars, I don't know how many years ago, and to whom the Government had given the Legion of Honour and two medals, in return for his right leg bestowed upon his country

and he, so far from regretting the circumstance, would no more have given back his ornaments, to get his leg restored, than he would have bartered the visits of his darling Miss Nelly to be made a marshal of France. 'Mademoiselle Nellie' was the only being whom the old man cared for, and perhaps the only being who cared for the old man. He loved her as he had loved his only daughter, before she left her home and nearly broke his heart; and he had a little chair—his daughter's when a child—which he kept for Nelly, and in which the little girl, when she came to see him, would fit herself compactly, and begin to talk so fast and unintelligibly, that the old man would grow bewildered. Yet, though he could understand but little, he loved to hear her prattle on. He loved to sit and look at her, to watch her round blue eyes one moment earnest and the next radiantly laughing, then perhaps a little overclouded, and again bursting forth into gay sunshine. He loved to hear her little tongue flow musically on, to see her ruby lips keeping up perpetual motion, curling and uncurling in a thousand pretty pouts and smiles: this was indeed sweet pleasure to the old man. Often he would tell stories to the child—thrilling accounts of the battles he had fought, the countries he had seen, and the dangers he had escaped—and tell them too with energy and spirit, as only a Frenchman can; and get upon his leg and wooden limb, and stump about the room gesticulating, and look so fierce that any child but Nelly would have been quite scared. She knew his love for her, and never feared his violence the least bit; but would would sit packed

tightly in her little chair, and take in all his movements, all his words, and wonder, sympathize and sorrow with all the might of her six years.

"One day the nurse fell sick, and after a short illness died. The poor child was overwhelmed with sorrow. Death she did not fully understand, but she saw her dear old friend look white and cold, and grieved because some men came and carried her away; and being told that she would never come back more, Nelly asked where she had gone, and her mamma said that she had gone to heaven.

"The child pondered this answer over in her mind, and one night, lying tucked up comfortably in her soft bed, she formed a grand project.

"The village where she lived was in the midst of mountains, and the furthest and the highest of them all were capped with never-melting snow, and seemed to touch the sky. And Nelly reasoned with her childish brain that if the mountain touched the sky, and heaven were in the skies, it would be an easy task to pass from the mountain into heaven; and if her legs, she thought, could only climb as high, she should see her nurse again. In the clear atmosphere the snow mountains seemed so near, and so little loftier than those around her, that it did not seem impossible to clamber up them. And Nelly fell asleep, and dreamed of bringing nurse back to earth, and never, never letting her go again. Next morning she got some extra bread and butter from the cook—two big slices thickly spread with jam—and doubling them together into a sandwich, tied it up in nice white paper, and thus provisioned set forth

secretly upon her journey. Her mother was accustomed to her going out alone, and asked her nothing; so Nelly trudged away with right good will, first along the dusty road which wound amongst the mountains, and then across the sheep tracks over them; her eyes fixed upon the snow tops, and keeping on towards them as straight as she could go; and marvelling much as she went on that the wished-for heights should seem no nearer than when she saw them from the village. Still she trotted on, half run half walk, until she was so tired that she sat down to rest, and eat her bread-and-jam; then she ladled some water with her little hands from a brook close by, and, somewhat refreshed, went on her way again, but not so briskly as before. Still the snow seemed as far, and yet as near as ever; and at last Nelly sat down again, and this time cried, partly because she was so tired, but more because she could not hope to reach the sky, and must turn back. So she sorrowfully retraced her steps, not tripping lightly over the ground as when she started, but limping wearily along. Soon she found that she could not tell whether she were going rightly, for every part was strange; and she grew frightened, and ran first one way, then another, until her poor blistered feet refused to carry their burden any more. And so she sank down on the turf and sobbed most piteously, for she knew that she was lost. 'God is punishing me,' she thought, 'for not telling mamma where I was going; He will not let me find my way back again. I shall never see my home any more. Oh, what shall I do! What shall I do!' And the

poor child wrung her hands in agony. Then she remembered that her mamma had told her, when she was in trouble, to pray to Jesus for help; so she knelt down as she was accustomed to do night and morning at her mother's lap, and lisped out, 'Please Jesus, I am lost. I have been naughty, but I am very very sorry. Don't punish me, for I will never do it again. Take me back to mamma. She will miss me so much. Oh, pray, Jesus! good Jesus! take me home.'

"Evening comes, and there is grief at the cottage, for Nelly has not come home. The old Frenchman has been visited, but knows nothing of his little friend. All the villagers have been in search, but have found no trace of their lost pet. Night sets in, passes, and morning comes. Still Nelly is missing. The old soldier is again resorted to, in the hope that he might remember something she had said which might give some clue—even the faintest—to her whereabouts; but his hut seems empty and the door is locked. Silence and gloom reign throughout the village. Horrible doubts and fears beset the grief-stricken parents. Then comes wild despair; and this, as the hours roll on, gives place to a resignation piteous to behold, for father and mother mourn their little one as dead. Suddenly a shout—a shout of joy. Louder and louder it peals forth. A crowd of men approach the cottage, bearing on their shoulders two forms, an old man and a child. The brave old cripple, strengthened by his God and fervent love, had accomplished what the young and hardy failed to do. He had found his darling—found her senseless, almost dead—and carrying her to a

shepherd's hut hard by, had chafed her hands and feet, and bathed her head, and brought her back to life; and after nourishment and rest was bringing back the lost lamb to the fold from whence she strayed, when the peasants met, and raised triumphantly on their brawny shoulders the brave old hero and his child.

"Nelly's prayer had been heard. When it seemed that nothing could save her, she had begged Jesus for help, and He gave it, as He always does to all who ask. He directed the old man's steps, and permitted the repentant child to reach her home again. Her fault was in acting secretly, without confiding in her mother. She relied on her own judgment, which led her to think mountains near that were really a long day's journey for a man on horseback. She fancied, because the snow seemed to join the sky, that therefore it touched it. You all of you, I hope, know that the stars are millions of miles above the tallest mountain; and you know also that the only way to get to heaven is to be good children whilst you are on earth; and then, when you die, Jesus will take you safely up there without any trouble on your part; and all the good friends that you have lost you will see again; and God will welcome you as his children, and make you happy for ever."

Edith had barely time to conclude the moral of her tale before the school closed. As she shook hands with her pupils they thanked her cordially, and hoped that she would always teach them, for they liked both her and her stories very much. She was pleased at this satisfactory end to so hopeless a

beginning, and, when Ernest and Mr. Travers met her, gave them a laughable description of her trials, and was in high spirits at her after success. Ernest was delighted to see her so hopeful, and said he feared that some of the worst children had been allotted to her, for a class was seldom so unmanageable as she had described hers to be. He recommended her to call at the homes of her most obstreperous pupils and speak to them alone. "It is astonishing," he said, "how much a little affectionate talk in private does for the very worst. They often come back to the school afterwards entirely subdued; and the black sheep of the flock become the most attentive learners."

CHAPTER XIII.

PAWNING A WATCH, AN EVENING AT CARDS, AND A VISIT TO A MONEY-LENDER.

When Mr. Travers returned home on Monday morning he found Willie still poorly, and not able to come down to breakfast. Edith could not conceal her embarrassment when asked the cause of her brother's illness; and her uncle, with his experience of the world and shrewd insight into young men's failings, guessed pretty correctly what was the matter. He thought it best not to interfere; bodily pain had probably brought repentance, and the smarting of conscience was more likely to effect a cure than any severity on his part.

"He scarcely took any food yesterday," said Edith, talking for the purpose of avoiding questions; "and this morning he has had nothing for breakfast. I told the cook yesterday to make some beef-tea for him, and on ringing for it just now—when I found my poor boy could not eat—she coolly sent up word that she had forgotten all about it! I do think she deserves to have warning; she does not mind me a bit. Last night she was out till ten o'clock with somé young man. The meat is often sent to dinner nearly raw; and now to let a sick person want,

without seeming to care in the least! It makes me quite in a passion, uncle, and I can't forget it."

"Have you spoken to her—given her a good scolding?"

"No, I confess that I have not," answered Edith, hesitatingly; "I had not moral courage enough."

"Just the way of your sex! I do protest against the custom of scolding an offender *to* some one who is entirely innocent. It is not fair. What have I done that I should be made the receptacle of your wrath against a refractory servant? Why should my peace of mind be destroyed while she goes scot free? It is the same thing all over the world. A man is afraid to reproach another who has wronged him, and pours out his anger on some neighbour instead. A governess is too weak-minded to tell her pupils their faults, and inflicts an account of them on some good-natured friend. It is a gross injustice, my dear niece, to give a lecture to me that is due to another. It is as bad to be scolded *to* as scolded *at*. You have made me feel as though I had been out last night in bad society, done an injury to my nephew, and defrauded the household of its daily food. I hang my head as a culprit; my equanimity is destroyed, and my temper ruffled, whilst the guilty domestic down stairs is pursuing her avocations in a perfectly contented frame of mind. There now, you are running away to scold me *to* your brother, and tell him what a bogy I am, and how dreadfully I tease you!"

Edith was glad to escape: she saw that her uncle was in one of his quizzing moods, and suspected that

his tone of bantering was assumed to relieve her embarrassment, which he must have noticed. He would not have been so unmoved if he had thought Willie really ill; and she feared that he guessed from her manner the nature of her brother's malady.

Willie, as soon as she entered his room, announced his intention of getting up immediately and returning to the hospital. He felt that he could not face his guardian just at present; and knowing that beyond bodily and mental prostration there was nothing much the matter with him, he was anxious to get back to his lodgings, and redeem the past by temperance and earnest work. Edith tried to dissuade him from returning on account of his health. She wished also that he should have more time for repentance and good resolution before he again faced the temptations of evil companions. He was, however, firm in his determination to go at once; and, finding that she could not induce him to stay, she asked if she might give him a little advice before he went.

"It is about Mr. Stanley that I wish to talk to you," she said. "I know that he must have been with you on Saturday night; you would not have got into that dreadful state alone. Dearest Willie, he is not a fit companion for you. When you joined us again in the country, I was trying to do him good. He is a sceptic, and, I fear, leads a dissipated life."

"You are mistaken altogether," interrupted Willie. "Stanley has an immense deal of good in him; but he shuts it up, and seldom lets it peep out. He is not particularly religious, that I allow; but he will be when he gets settled down in life. As to his

not being a good companion for me, that is ridiculous; he never leads me astray. All that I do wrong, I am sorry to say, I do of my own free will. He begged me not to drink more on Saturday, when he saw that I was getting tipsy; but I was such a mad fool that I would not be persuaded. One day he tried to prevent my losing money at billiards; another day he helped me in my studies; he gave me assistance and good advice when I got into a squabble. He is a faithful ally, and I won't have him abused. My sins are on my head, and mine alone."

Edith was not wholly convinced of the propriety of Stanley's friendship by this energetic defence; but, fearing to annoy her brother, she did not press the subject further. Willie, according to this resolution, returned to town, escaping from his uncle's presence after as few words as possible, his hang-dog look confirming that gentleman's suspicions as to the cause of his late indisposition. The first thing that he heard on his arrival in London, was the news of Stevens' death. He was inexpressibly shocked. The scene was described to him in all its hideously grotesque details by a student who had sat up with the dying youth; and Willie, after listening in unspeakable horror, hurried away to his rooms, anxious to be alone that he might fall on his knees before God, and offer fervent thanks that he had been spared a like fate; acknowledging that he had been rushing fast towards the same precipice, and praying earnestly that for the future he might be strictly temperate. Long he remained meditating on the

fearful account that he had heard. He seemed to see the bed of death—the white-haired father—and the delirious son. The same voice that not long ago in the billiard room had accused him of drunkenness, now shouted the ravings of madness in his ear. Again he knelt, and for a time became absorbed in prayer. Let us leave him thus, and hope that the warning he has received may be the means of arresting him in his downward course.

One afternoon, about a week after Stevens' death, a curious scene was enacted within the gates of St. John's. The court was crowded with students watching, with intense delight, the professor of chemistry, who was gravely applying a bladder of gas to the mouth and nostrils of a tall, martial-looking student, with a fierce moustache. A dead silence prevailed during the inhalation; and then the soldierly youth tossed his head back like an enraged bull, twirled his moustache, stuck his glass in his eye, regarded the professor with a contemptuous stare, and with a side blow deliberately knocked his hat off. The learned gentlemen did not wait a further attack, but ignominiously took to his heels, and ran up the steps to his sanctum, which was close behind him. Finding his victim gone, the aggressor haughtily surveyed the laughing bystanders, and appearing suddenly to take offence at one particular individual, darted at him furiously. The young gentleman selected evaded the charge by stepping aside; and then ensued a chase, round the pillars, in and out of open doors, across the court and round the court, up and down the gravel path; every one obstructing the pursuer

and favouring the pursued, until at last *le militaire* seized some one else, and began to pummel him instead. All rushed to the rescue. Moustaches struck indiscriminately right and left, grew feeble, rubbed his eyes, smiled, and subsided into quiet. The professor again emerged, bladder in hand; and a fat, pudgy little man advanced amidst shouts of laughter, and applied his mouth to the gas. Having administered a sufficient dose, the lecturer hastily retreated, fearing for the safety of his hat and head. His patient remained in the middle of the court stock still, an idiotic grin upon his face, his toes turned in, his knees bent and helpless, and his thumbs slowly twirling one over the other. Thus he remained for full five minutes, in spite of the pinching, shouting, and coat-tail pulling to which the students treated him. Then he recovered his senses, looked scared, and walked quickly away. After him a dandified youth strolled leisurely up; and having taken a few whiffs, his manner underwent a marvellous change. Languor gave place to sprightliness; he buried his hands in his pockets, spread out his trowsers like balloons, pointed his toes, put his head on one side, winked knowingly at the company, and executed a series of fantastic dancing steps with the greatest agility and precision. Next he threw his hat in the air, caught it dexterously, stuck it on the back of his head, and swaggered round the court with his chin elevated and arms akimbo, looking the picture of self-satisfaction and conceit. Suddenly he stopped, seemed to recollect himself, and joining in the mirth at his own expense, watched with the rest

for the next volunteer. Stanley and several others were pushing Willie forward, and he was protesting and hanging back.

"Come, sir," said the professor encouragingly; "you must be a martyr to science for a few minutes; you look an interesting subject."

Thus adjured, Willie approached and very unwillingly took his dose. Having done so, he stood for a moment as if bewildered; and then making a furious dash at Wilson—who happened to be standing near him—seized him round the waist, and by a great effort of strength tossed him clean on to his shoulders, and ran up the path with his burden like a young dromedary, with a couple of dozen students after him in full hue and cry. Just as his pursuers came up, he tumbled poor Wilson head over heels upon the ground; and giving one quick glance back, took a short run, bent his body nearly double, and cleared the tall spiked railings that separated the path from the garden, at one magnificent bound. The shock brought him to his right mind, and he was astonished to discover that he had performed a feat of which in a state of sanity he would never have dreamed.

The process of inhaling was repeated on a good many others with varied effect. Some were combative; some giggled; and others made themselves quietly ridiculous. On certain of them, however, the poison seemed to have no influence; and these either walked away smiling triumphantly, or, not liking to be deprived of their fun, shammed the delirium and proceeded to buffet those personages who were most

disagreeable to them, fixing their man and sticking to him with extreme pertinacity. What was this wonderful effluvia which so disturbed the mind, and stimulated the bump of combativeness? It was Laughing Gas. The lecturer on chemistry, some years before, wishing to make some experiments as to its effects on the human brain, induced some students to offer themselves as subjects. The *séances* were performed in public, and proved so highly diverting that pupils, one and all, begged for a repetition. The professor, a good-natured man, could not deny them their joke; and so, that which had been commenced for purposes of science had now degenerated into a pastime; and the performances took place on a fixed day once in every year.

At this entertainment Stanley made his first appearance since Stevens' death. He looked pale and haggard, and told Willie that he had been in the country.

"Did your sister see you that night?" he asked anxiously.

"She opened the door to me."

"She did!" exclaimed Stanley. "I thought my knock would have been certain to stir up a servant." "Confound it!" he added, looking much distressed, as the thought how certainly Edith would connect him with her brother's condition forced itself upon his mind. "How excessively vexing! I hope she did not faint or go into a fit?"

"She did nothing of the kind, I am happy to say; she behaved like a trump; I don't know what I should have done without her. She got me up to bed, nursed me next day—for I was awfully seedy—

and showed me every kindness without one word of reproach. You need not be at all annoyed about your own association in the affair, for I told her you were my best friend; and by my eloquence I believe thoroughly convinced her of the fact. I want you to give your mind to something else at present, and advise me about certain money matters which have been pestering me during the last few days, till I am half mad. My landlady has been dunning me for money; for I have not paid her a farthing since I took the lodgings. The day before yesterday she was most insolent: when I informed her that I could not settle her account, she told me that she had paid for everything I had eaten out of her own purse; and that she had never seen the colour of my money, even so much as a halfpenny. I must somehow or other get ten pounds. I can't apply to my uncle, for he gave me a liberal allowance when I came up to the hospital, and I have frittered it away on I know not what. I owe a wine-merchant and a tobacconist something, but their bills are not pressing. The woman of the house ought to be paid at once. I must find the cash; can you help me to do so?"

"I will lend you a fiver with pleasure, if that will be of any use; I am terribly hard up myself at present, or you should have the ten. But, there are your watch and chain; you can easily get five on them, if you will condescend to that sort of thing; I have done it myself."

"Do you mean pawn them?" asked Willie, looking rather aghast.

"My humble mind has conceived precisely that

idea. You need not look so staggered; the transaction will be perfectly private; no one need know of it except your newly-acquired uncle and yourself. You will be *minus* timepiece, and consequently sometimes late for lectures; but I know of no other inconvenience that you will suffer; and you can surely bear this for the sake of getting out of your difficulties. When your allowance falls due, you can redeem the pledge, and your embarrassments are over."

"I will do it," said Willie, decisively, convinced by his friend's arguments. "Tell me where to go, and I am off at once; and thank you very much for the loan of the five pounds."

"I will show you the shop, but you must do the job alone; for though, under stern necessity, my parent's brother has beheld my face, yet my natural repugnance to the good gentleman is so great that I cannot visit him without strong pressure."

Willie declaring that he would willingly do the deed by himself, a cab was called, and the coach man directed to drive to the sign of the three balls. Looking stealthily to the right and left, and feeling like a novice about to pick his first pocket, Willie entered the shop, and passed into one of the cupboard-like recesses which insure privacy to customers. These boxes were arranged side by side; each was open in front and overlooked the counter, but was closed behind by the door for entrance and exit. A person in one closet could not see who was in another, though he could easily hear him making his bargains.

"What can I do for you, sir?" said the shopman, addressing some one in the cell adjoining Willie's.

A hand was stretched out—a young man's, it seemed white and thin—and laid upon the counter a large, old-fashioned locket containing a piece of white hair. As the pawnbroker turned it over in examination, Willie saw engraved upon its back "F. M., from his mother."

"Can't lend more than five shillings, sir; the gold is thin, and the trinket's only good for melting down."

"Add the price of a quartern of gin, and it's a bargain," said a trembling voice.

"Well, I'll go as far as that, since you're a good customer," answered the shopman; and he wrote the ticket and handed it over with the money.

Willie could not resist taking a glimpse of the man who would pawn his mother's keepsake. So, peeping out of the door as his neighbour took his departure, he saw a thin, pale-faced youth, rather older than himself, who looked a gentleman in spite of his worn clothes, striking a match on the shop wall, and endeavouring to light a dirty public-house pipe. He held the flame at least half a foot from the tobacco, and sucked vigorously at the mouth-piece; no smoke appearing, he took the pipe from his mouth, scrutinised and blew through it. Then he tried another lucifer, and this time effecting his purpose, with a slight stagger gained the street. The poor creature was tipsy. Willie turned away with a sigh, closed his door again, and gave up his watch.

"What name and address shall I say?" asked the man, waiting to write the ticket.

"I—I—had rather not give my name."

"Say Jenkins, of Cheapside," suggested the man, cheerfully, writing it down without waiting for an an answer.

With a bank-note taking the place of his watch in his waistcoat pocket, Willie left the shop, and drew a long breath, as if relieved from suffocation. Mr. Dixon, the surgeon, was at that moment passing; he gave a glance at Willie, and another at the pawnbroker's; and, evidently connecting the two together, walked on with a cold bow.

"He must have seen me come out!" said Willie, meeting Stanley, who was waiting in ambush round the corner.

"It is very unfortunate," replied the latter; "but it can't be helped. You will sink a step or so in his estimation, that is all; it would not afflict me much."

But it did afflict Willie, and not a little. Mr. Dixon was his *beau idéal* of a gentleman and a surgeon, and he valued his good opinion more than that of the whole staff.

"I ought to warn you," said Stanley, "that you will find it rather awkward when asked the time, and may probably have to invent legends of mainsprings broken, or works being cleaned; but I have no doubt your imagination is fertile enough for any difficulty of this sort."

Willie was not so sanguine on this point. He was thoroughly truthful, detesting any approach to a lie; and he could not help wishing that his property were again in his possession, even at the sacrifice of the loan he had just received.

That evening, Stanley had a supper party at his rooms; and Willie, after a good deal of persuasion, agreed to join it; stipulating to be allowed to leave when he chose, and begging particularly not to be pressed to drink.

There were five other guests besides himself, and the amusement of the evening was *Vingt-et-un*. "A mild game," Stanley remarked, with diminutive stakes that could damage nobody's purse. Willie would have been more pleased to look on than play, for he remembered his first essay at billiards; but, not liking to appear unsociable, he conquered his scruples, and taking a hand with the rest, was soon deep in the mysteries of "over-drawing," "standing," "naturals," and "twenty-ones."

After playing for some time, alternately winning and losing a shilling or two, it came to his turn to deal, and he began to get rid of his money at an alarming rate. Never were the cards so unfortunate. The low stakes mounted alarmingly, now that he had to pay six people instead of one. He began to play desperately, and "double" each time, drinking large gulps of brandy-and-water, from which he had hitherto abstained.

"Sell your deal," whispered Stanley; "you will lose all your money."

"I have lost too much for that: my only chance lies in keeping on," replied Willie, his cheeks very red, and looking wild about the eyes.

But alas! ill fortune rained steadily on, and never a glimpse of light shone through the clouds. The deal seemed endless. Willie drank brandy, and

played recklessly. The five pounds for the watch had long disappeared, and Stanley's lately received loan was fast following it, when at last a "natural" was turned, and the deal was over.

By the time the party broke up, Willie had but a few shillings remaining. Stanley had won a little, and the others had divided the ten pounds pretty equally between them. Willie put a good face on the matter before his friends, laughed at his ill luck, and, saying that he was consoled by the old adage, that he should have good fortune in love, walked home, abusing the cards, the brandy, and everything but himself.

Miserable enough he felt next morning when he awoke in his sober senses, his watch and chain gone, and ten pounds as good as thrown into the sea. Breakfast appeared; bread-and-butter only.

"Missus says you ain't to have no meat till you've settled the butcher's bill," said the servant girl, grinning.

What abominable impertinence!" exclaimed Willie. "Tell your mistress,——." He stopped, remembering his miserably dependent position, and said quietly, "That will do; I shall want nothing else."

"No message?" asked the girl, sarcastically.

"None. Please to leave the room."

He was indeed humbled, and felt his punishment acutely. "This can't go on," he thought; "I shall be in jail soon! I must either borrow money, or confess to my uncle. I will see Stanley again, and get him to help me. I can endure no longer being in that woman's power; it is torturing!"

Stanley had been annoyed beyond measure at his friend's bad fortune, and foolish play; and he was thinking of the best plan of remedying his losses when Willie arrived, full of troubles, and imploring assistance.

Stanley told him that he knew of a Jew who might lend him something; but that he would certainly not get more than five pounds out of him, and for that he would have to pay heavy interest.

Jumping at anything in his present state of mind, Willie eagerly asked where the man was to be found, and begged for an introduction.

"The old boy knows me," said Stanley, "having swindled me once or twice, as he assuredly will you; so, if you like, we will pay him a visit in company. During the morning he is always hanging about the bar of the Crown and Sceptre, near the hospital, and we shall find him there without doubt."

"Old Abram," as the students called him, was a middle-aged individual of unprepossessing exterior. His face was long, complexion speckled, and cheek-bones high. He had a beaked nose, suggesting an ability to peck; small, restless eyes, that had scarcely settled upon an object before—butterfly-like, they flitted to something else, and a chronic expression of cunning which never varied. A greasy strip of black hair descended obliquely to the origin of each cork-screw whisker, and he nourished an imperial so exactly triangular, that it was impossible to avoid the conclusion that any two of its sides must be greater than the third.

He wore a shepherd's plaid shooting coat, dark

with age; trousers of the same material laterally diversified by a black stripe; a cotton velvet waistcoat with blue glass buttons; and a steel watchchain, on which hung a bunch of gimcracks, consisting of a dog's head, a whistle, a racehorse, a compass, and a coachman's horn. His boots, originally of patent leather, were now blacked over and patched at the toes. An ornament, like a wedding ring swelled half a dozen diameters, graced the forefinger of one hand, whilst the corresponding digit of the other sported a monstrous diamond, which was evidently the produce of a British shore. A dirty white hat perched jauntily upon his head completed his outward man.

Abram supported himself nominally by dealing in old clothes; Abram supported himself actually by swindling his fellow-men. Cheating was his trade; cheating was his amusement; and cheating was the highest purpose of his life.

He studied the character, weakness, habits, and predilections of those with whom he came in contact, solely with the view of cheating them with celerity and ease. He belonged to the worst class of wicked men; he was a methodical sinner; he never committed what the world calls indiscretions: he did not drink, thieve, or get into debt; but he sinned with a cold-blooded prudence, considering before he committed a crime if disagreeable consequences were likely to follow, and resisting or yielding to his inclinations as his judgment prompted him. He confined his attention almost entirely to medical students, having investigated their mental obliquities

with especial care, and being able, therefore, to persuade them out of their goods and chattels without much difficulty.

His beat lay about the hospitals, and St. John's he considered his peculiar property, and allowed none of his countrymen to interfere with his rights. He bought everything that his customers had to sell; and a fast youth, with plenty of portable property, who once got within his claws, would soon be stripped of all he possessed. He lent small sums of money also, cautiously, and only to a favoured few. Every student he knew by name; also, when he had entered the hospital, what examinations he had passed, where he lived, and how he lived, whether he were steady or inclined to go the pace. None could tell how he got his information; but he was an adept in his trade, and somehow found means to accomplish his ends. He laid claim to a friendship with the surgeons and physicians, spoke of them familiarly as Johnny Dixon, Teddy Johnson, and so on, hinted darkly at a private interview with this or that great man, and rapped his pockets to indicate its pecuniary character. To hear him talk, one would imagine the whole staff at his feet vending old garments and borrowing sovereigns. Of course it was all pure invention, fabricated to catch the prouder students by showing what their superiors were not ashamed to do.

Abram had a passion for cards, but never played unless with one his inferior in skill. At billiards and skittles he betted, but did not join in the game: he would sit and look on for hours over a pint of ale, watch the faces of the players, judge their

skill, and back them accordingly. At races and prize fights he was often present, and seldom returned from either without a heavier purse than when he started. Sometimes, but not often, he bought stolen goods: it was against his principles to do so, but occasionally a bargain was offered him too tempting to resist. He was a married man, and, like most of his nation, a faithful husband and a kind father; but his domestic virtues were, I fear, his only ones.

"Ah, Mr. S.! glad to see you looking so well," he said beamingly, as Stanley and Willie appeared at the Crown and Sceptre. "Mr. Travers your friend? Happy to make the acquaintance of any friend of yours. Mr. S.'s likings are my likings; we shall get on together, Mr. T. Come on business, I suppose, gents?" he added in a confidential tone. "Of course you have. The back room is quite empty; we shall be quiet there, and have no Paul Prys about our ears. What will I take? I am obliged to you; a glass of sherry wine is my usual beverage. You'll drink beer, will you? Polly, my dear! a pot of bitter and a half-pint of sherry in the parlour directly."

Whilst talking thus he had taken in every line of Willie's face, guessed his errand, calculated his gullibility, how profitable he was likely to be, and how far he could be trusted.

"Got a few articles in the coat and book way for me, I suppose, Mr. T.?" he said, as soon as the parlour door closed upon them, knowing perfectly well that Willie had got nothing of the sort.

"My friend has nothing to sell," said Stanley;

"he has come to borrow five pounds, or more if you can lend it, and must have the money immediately."

"Five pounds!" exclaimed the Jew in affected astonishment. "Why, who do you take me for? Baron Rothschild, or Miss Coutts dressed as a man? I am only an old clo', as you know very well, and manage to get enough bread by the business just to keep me from starving. Five pounds indeed! Why, it would feed me for a quarter of the year."

"Abram, you are a humbug," said Stanley quietly. "Leave off those stale dodges before me, because I don't swallow them. I know you are not a Crœsus, but you have saved a round sum; and, instead of five pounds, you could lend five hundred if you chose."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Jew. "Don't mind him, Mr. T.; he must have his joke. Poor old Abram lend five hundred pounds! Ha! ha! I wish some of my creditors could hear that bit of fun, they wouldn't be quite so pressing for their money. Five hundred yellow, chinking sovereigns, buttoned up in Abram's pocket all of a heap! Try again, Mr. S., you won't beat that!"

"The fact is," continued Stanley, taking no notice of these facetiæ, "my friend will, I have no doubt, give you a good interest for your money, and some left-off clothes into the bargain. He is a first year's student, therefore can't run away; and he will pay in a couple of months as safe as the bank. If you cared a jot for my name I would back his bill; but, as my signature is valueless, you must hand him the money on his own security. Come, Abram," he

added briskly, "dub up, old fellow; remember what you have made out of me."

"For your sake, Mr. S., I would do anything; but five pounds! 'pon honour I haven't got it. Look here," he said, pulling some money out of his pocket and counting it on the table. "Two sovereigns, six shillings, and a halfpenny is all I have in the world; if this be any use to Mr. T. he is welcome to it."

"He must have a fiver," said Stanley impatiently; "if you can't lend it we must go somewhere else."

"Don't be angry, Mr. S.," said Abram, in a tone of supplication. "Now, please don't; I can't bear to see you cross. I tell you what I will do!" he exclaimed suddenly, as if a bright idea had struck him; "yes, I'll go as far as that to serve a friend at a pinch; I'll run home and borrow three pounds of my landlady on my watch. No thanks, gents; I am as good as my word, I will go this instant. Give me a few minutes' grace and I'll join you again;" and he hastened out of the room.

In a marvellously short time he reappeared, steel chain and appendages gone, and three sovereigns in his hand.

"Three and two is five," he said, sitting down with a business-like air and getting ready the I O U. "You shall only pay me six, and throw in a couple of suits of clothes that ain't too much worn. You can't think that being hard on you, Mr. T."

Willie assented to the proposal, as he would have done to any that supplied his present necessities; and, the bargain being concluded, Abram begged politely to have the pleasure of drinking his new friend's

health, apologised, as he discovered with seeming amazement that he had finished his wine, and accepted Willie's offer of another half-pint with easy grace. Then, perceiving that nothing more was to be made out of his victim, he finished his new measure with all possible speed, arranged the white hat in a fascinating manner over his left ear, and went in search of further prey.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DISCOURSE ON FASHION, AN EARNEST EXHORTATION. A BALL, AND A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

THE five pounds obtained from the Jew satisfied Willie's landlady for the present, and Stanley managed to lend him something more for daily expenses. With this he contrived to keep himself afloat until his allowance came in; but before long he was compelled to brave his uncle's displeasure, and write for an extra remittance. Mr. Travers was disposed to regard leniently his nephew's extravagance, as it was his first essay in housekeeping; and, with a few words of advice concerning future economy, sent him a liberal present without asking questions. Willie was delighted with his uncle's kindness, but could not help feeling that if he had candidly confessed his difficulties at once, instead of borrowing money in an underhand way, his embarrassments would have been nipped in the bud, and would not have grown to their present proportions. Out of his reinforcement he paid Stanley and the money-lender; and, greatly to his satisfaction, redeemed his watch. His pawnbroking transaction had caused him much misery; for some waggish students, noticing the absence of his gold

chain, and guessing from their own experiences where it had gone, persisted on all occasions in asking him the time in a peculiarly loud voice, and bursting into shouts of laughter at his inability to answer; putting him to an agony of shame, and causing him to absent himself as much as possible from hospital duties. He was therefore intensely pleased to recover his property; and, when the Christmas holidays came round, was able to go home without fearing every moment lest he should be asked the hour, or fancying that each knock at the door indicated a visitor in shepherd's-plaid, demanding the payment of six pounds and two suits of clothes not too much worn.

He begged to be allowed to ask Stanley to spend a week with him; and Mr. Travers, knowing nothing to Stanley's disadvantage, and thinking him a pleasant, gentlemanly young man, readily assented to the request. Stanley was therefore invited, much to the annoyance of Edith, who thought him her brother's evil genius, and, regarding him in this light, felt that she could not give him a cordial reception. Stanley eagerly accepted his friend's proffered hospitality; he had intended making Willie's residence at home an excuse for calling there frequently and so seeing Edith; and of course a week of living in the same house with her gave far more opportunities for love-making than casual calls.

In a few days he was an inmate of Orange House, clothed in his best behaviour, and wielding all his powers of fascination to win the good graces of uncle and niece. Edith at first avoided him as much as possible, and was coldly civil; but when she saw how fond

he was of her brother, how kindly he gave up a part of each morning to coaching him in the subjects for a coming hospital examination, how regular his habits seemed and how domestic he appeared, she began to think she had judged him too harshly, and that he really had much good in him, as Willie had asserted. And when, one morning, meeting her alone in the breakfast-room, Stanley made an ingenuous confession of what had occurred on that night she so well remembered; when he generously laid all the blame of her brother's intoxication on himself, and yet somehow made it appear that he could not have acted otherwise than he did; when he told her that, feeling faint for want of nourishment, he had entered a house of refreshment and persuaded Willie to accompany him; how there he had encountered an old sea-captain with whom he had made a voyage some years ago; how the skipper would insist upon treating them to champagne, and how drinking the wine out of tumblers had led Willie inadvertently to take too much; how he, Stanley, had not perceived his condition until too late to remedy it; and how, in spite of his entreaties, Willie had persisted in ordering brandy, which wholly incapacitated him; after hearing and perceiving how repentant Stanley seemed, Edith felt that she had cruelly misjudged him; however irreligious he had shown himself to be, he was not wholly bad; and, secretly hoping that she might yet be the means of converting him, she began to con over her most convincing arguments with the intention of again assaulting his infidelity on the first favourable occasion.

His confession was true in substance, though he was much more to blame in the matter than he had made it appear. He had ordered another bottle of champagne after two were finished, making Willie feel under an obligation to contribute a fourth; had been the first to drink brandy as a top-up to the wine, and had used very moderate efforts to prevent Willie from following his example. He was rejoiced to find that his story had won him Edith's favour; and, during his visit, proved such an agreeable companion, was so full of conversation, so cleverly amusing, sang so well and sketched so beautifully, and withal proved himself such a kind friend to Willie, that even Mr. Travers was deceived into pronouncing him an amiable, unaffected, and humble-minded young man.

The last morning of his stay arrived, and he had not addressed to Edith a word of love; he had not dared to do so; he felt that his only chance of gaining her affections lay in treating her respectfully as a valued friend. He knew that she could not yet love him, but that she took an interest in him he clearly saw; and he hoped that in time this interest might develop love. Rather sadly he sat down to his last breakfast in her company; for he and Willie were to go to a ball that evening, and the following morning he had to be off by an early train, having to travel all the way to Scotland, where his father awaited him.

"I expect we shall be awfully crowded to-night," observed Willie; "they say two hundred people are expected, and Mrs. Macdonald's rooms won't hold half that number comfortably."

"It is you women, Edith, who take up so much room

with your absurd way of dressing," said Mr. Travers. "Every woman is a slave to the tyrant Fashion, and I may say half the men are his obedient servants also. If you could only hear your king issuing his mandates, how ridiculous it would sound. Fancy a a few commands after this style:—

"Daughters of England, it is decreed that with your brushes you force the hair resolutely from the face until the roots have attained a harp-string tightness. Retain it in this position by suitable means, and of the straggling portions left in front glean a little bunch on either side: this, with the aid of warm water and finger and thumb, transform into a curl; smear it with a solution of gum-arabic and stick it on the cheek, below and somewhat posterior to the organ of vision.

"Or again:—We command that with a hairpin or instrument specially devised for the purpose you twist the front hair piece by piece until it will turn no more. The process is to be carried out at bedtime, and the pain and indentation of the face caused by compression of the hard capillary balls may be remedied by sleeping on the back.

"Willie received an order not long ago, and obeyed it most loyally. It was addressed to the male subjects, and ran thus:—

"Your king requires that you straightway crop your hair as closely as did the Puritans of olden time, or as do the convicts of the present day. No matter, gentlemen, if you be in delicate health and fear exposure. No matter if you luxuriate in silken locks, or, whiskerless, should look without your hair all knobs

and angles. No matter if a judicious wave have hitherto concealed enormous ears; our behest must be obeyed.

"Our king Fashion is a lenient prince; he does not, like the tyrants of other countries, make us ring our noses, slit our cheeks, or deform our feet; nor does he bid us live on milk and fat until we attain a Lambert-like obesity. We are not forced to grow our nails a foot in length and curl them; nor are our women obliged to hide their beauty behind a mask and shut themselves up from sight of man. Some slight trials of fortitude our sovereign certainly does require. Your nose, my dear Edith, he permits to be your own, but your ears are his. Pierce them, he says savagely, stab them, drill them through, and hang a golden weight from each fleshy hole. And surely King Fashion must be pleased with his subjects, for they are faithful slaves. Some he has been deprived of suddenly whilst in the midst of the duties that they owe their prince. His late enactment, crinoline, destroyed many a true follower; and, if he is tender-hearted, he must be sad to see the young, the beautiful, the thoughtless, meeting with a fate so cruel as death by fire. But what is his grief at these calamities compared with the joy, the pride he must feel at the conduct of the survivors! He beholds how unflinchingly they still obey him, still adhere to an institution which has scattered death around. Unawed and resolute they face the grim *skeleton* without dismay."

"You are very sarcastic, sir," said Stanley, laughing; "but your rebuke is just. We young people

are indeed miserably subservient to King Fashion. I have become an insurgent now, but formerly I was a pattern of loyalty; and, when I recall my vicissitudes as to garments since I first arrayed myself as a man, the constant succession of changes seems positively absurd. The burden of my life used to be collars. The first that I can recollect were of the class termed 'gills;' they were equilateral triangles, you remember, having their bases at the line of junction with the scarf, and their apices on the cheek-bones, and were secured in position by means of tape strings. Then came tall 'stand-ups,' continuous behind, and showing at the back of the neck for at least two inches above the coat, causing an apparent deficiency of the lower half of the skull. After these came the far-famed 'dog-collar,' with its accompanying Noah's-ark coat and miniature umbrella, evenly ruling a cruel red line round my martyred neck, and requiring nocturnal applications of cold cream to enable me to support the lacerations of the day. 'Turn-downs' were a great relief, though at the same time a source of inconceivable anxiety. A collar of this description, to meet the approval of Fashion, was obliged to be broad, three-fold, set low in the neck, and above all, to have its two points meeting exactly at the button-hole. I never could get this combination of essentials perfectly to my taste; and as I bought my collars by the dozen, the amount of failures that filled my drawers would have stocked a shop. I am superior to collars now, I am happy to say, and so I don't mind confessing my past iniquities."

"Sir," said Mr. Travers with mock gravity, "I

respect your candour, and congratulate you on your emancipation; you have evidently been an abject slave. My nephew here is still in bondage; he dares not tie his neckerchief in his own way. Has he by infinite pains and patience attained excellence at a knot, Fashion bids him wear his scarf without tying it at all. Has he half-ruined himself in the purchase of a new pin, he is ordered to throw it aside and draw his scarf through a ring. Oh, all poor victims of fashion, how I pity you! Do you like an early dinner and a homely tea? You dare not have them. Do you like to walk in a wideawake instead of a hat, to abandon gloves, to dine in a morning coat, to go to the sea-side in June? These luxuries are denied you. Have you ever eaten leg of mutton and onion sauce, pea soup, or potatoes under the meat? Do you know what shrimps are, or sallylunns? Alas! these good things are not for you. Oh, you poor creatures, throw off the yoke that oppresses you. Dress in sackcloth if it please you, or array yourselves in suits of Prussian blue. Say, each one, I am a free Englishman and will not submit to petty tyranny. I will not be told what coat to wear, what time to dine, how long I may stop in town, and when I may go into the country. I deny your right, oh Fashion! to limit me to French cookery; I will have boiled mutton and turnips, if I please. No mortal shall forbid me radishes at tea. No longer will I submit to appear like a waiter at your balls; as soon would I make my morning visits in plush and powder. No, I rebel. Disown me, scoff at me if you will, henceforth I will be free!"

"It seems to me," said Edith, after the laughter at Mr. Travers' energetic sally had subsided, "that if gentlemen are supposed to dress fashionably for the sake of us girls, they make a grand mistake in the choice of their attire. A suit of dark material would please us more than their fast shooting coats; and if they could manage to be always in mourning for the sake of the cloth band round their hats, their appearance would be irresistible. Men are very particular about their boots; at least," she added, looking slyly at Willie, "I know a certain gentleman who is so. Now, I don't believe girls ever look at a gentleman's boots; the only thing we care at all about is linen; your cuffs and collars should be of the finest and whitest, and there our requirements end. There are very few of us who know if a man is dressed fashionably or not; we can see if his coat fits him, but that is the limit of our intelligence."

"Bravo, Miss Travers! you hit us dexterously," said Stanley, laughing. "Whether we dress at your sex or not I won't confess, but I unhesitatingly acquit you of dressing at ours. Ladies seek to please the critical sisterhood; the gratification of the bread-winners doesn't matter. Madame la Mode appears in a garment that suits her; and young, old, fat and thin, round-faced and long-faced, rosy and pale, instantly jump into a similar one without the slightest regard for appearances. What becomes the red-cheeked damsel makes a pale complexion hideous. A cloak that suits a stout person gives a spare one the look of an empty sack. The bonnet that sets off Florence renders Emily a fright; but will Emily

give it up on this account? not if she has a spark of womanly pride. Vanity will make her regret the fashion, but she cannot desert it; she will be happy when her abomination goes out, but until then she endures it, and dons her ugliness stoically day by day with a fortitude worthy of a better cause."

"You are a man of discrimination," said Mr. Travers, regarding Stanley approvingly; "and your sentiments are entirely my own. I believe the grand reason — if Edith will excuse me — why woman intellectually is so inferior to man, is her love of dress. Were it not for this failing on her part, we should turn out female geniuses by the tun. Dress occupies a woman's thoughts so much that her mind is spoilt for higher conceptions. Let any middle-aged wife or maiden look back on her past life, and try to estimate the amount of time that she has spent in even talking of her clothes; and if she is not rich let her add to her reckoning the time spent in cutting, stitching, and contriving; and the result may somewhat astonish her. I do believe that those numerous families who dress fashionably without the proper means of doing so, spend nearly the whole of the time that they are not exhibiting themselves in preparing for the same. What a noble career to look back upon, when stretched upon the bed of death! When single knocks bring no more palpitations concerning expected bonnets; for nothing more in the millinery way is needed except grave-clothes."

All were struck by the awfulness of this concluding sarcasm, and a painful silence ensued. Mr. Travers, when he wished to expose a folly, was not particular

that his remarks should be agreeable to his hearers; the few neighbours whom he knew entertained a lively dread of him, and even Edith, who thought him all that was good, wished that he would express his sentiments less bitterly. She saw the justice of his irony now, but had rather it had been clothed in milder words.

"I am sure, uncle, you don't understand women one bit," she said gaily, wishing to lead the conversation back to a pleasant channel. "If you were talking to a girl you would treat her like a child, as if she had no understanding, and no ideas beyond a ballroom or the last new novel."

"I am certain he would," chimed in Willie. "Uncle considers women a concentration of vanities, and would temper his conversation to suit her tastes."

"A regular conspiracy against me," said Mr. Travers, laughing. "I beg to state that my researches on the feminine gender have been most comprehensive, and the diversities of woman's character have received a thorough investigation. Put before me any ordinary young female, and I will tell you exactly what she likes and dislikes. I know that she would object to being talked to as Edith describes; it would insult her intellect and lessen her self-respect. I should not imagine her mind a fit receptacle for nothing but trivialities. She would probably be properly educated, perhaps clever, and very likely well read, if she did not belong to the struggling-to-be-fashionable set. Why should I then treat her like a wax doll? Men do, I am well aware,

converse with girls as if they despised them, drawling out insufferable nonsense which can only elicit monosyllabic replies; but, for my own part, if I wished to please this supposititious young person, I should talk with her almost as I would with another man; I should speak of rational subjects, ask her opinions and respect them. If she showed ignorance, I should not appear to observe it, I should draw her out upon the topic that I found she knew best; and in this way I should win her regard quicker than by a fire of vapid witticism."

"Really, uncle dear, you are better acquainted with girls than I imagined," said Edith. "I wonder since you know so much of us that you never fell in love."

"Perhaps my very knowledge prevented my doing so," said Mr. Travers drily.

"I don't believe you one bit!" laughed Edith.

"But, Mr. Stanley, you promised to help me in the garden, you know, this morning; and it is time we set to work. We are going to cut out a diamond piece of grass, uncle, and dig up the mould beneath, so that I can plant it with flowers when the spring comes round. Come, Willie, we can't do without you; it will be hard labour, and I must have it finished this morning;" and she preceded the young men into the garden and set them vigorously to work.

Willie dug like a navvy for a quarter of an hour; and then, declaring he was completely exhausted, withdrew to the comfort of a book and an easy chair, leaving Stanley and Edith to accomplish their task

alone. After a good deal of spade work and fatiguing manipulation with hoes and rakes, the new plot was finished; and the workers, surveying their achievement with satisfaction, sat down upon a rustic bench to rest. For some time the conversation turned on gardening, and the best flowers to cultivate in the newly made bed. Presently Stanley said, "I have long wanted to thank you for your endeavour some time ago to do me good; a natural dislike to grave subjects has prevented my speaking before, but you must not think by my silence that I am ungrateful."

"Have my poor words really made a good impression on you?" asked Edith, her eyes brightening with hope.

"I did not mean you to imagine that," he answered sadly. "I am sorry to say that I have given your arguments but little consideration; religious thoughts make me so low-spirited. I wished only to thank you for your kind intentions."

Edith was deeply disappointed at this avowal. For a moment she had fancied that her efforts had been successful and that his heart was softened. "I will try once more to save him," she thought. "God teach me what to say."

"I am grieved, Mr. Stanley, to hear you speak in this way," she began. "I had imagined from your manner that I had influenced you for good. I long to lead you to Jesus; for, without him, how can you stand before God at the last day! How awful will it be to see those whom you have loved on earth enter the heavenly gates and find yourself kept out!

What should I feel to meet Willie and my uncle at the throne of judgment, to greet them joyfully as returned after a long absence, to hear Jesus say to them, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, and myself to be torn away from them never to see their faces more. Think of the horror of living with thieves and murderers for ever and ever, to have none to love you, and none whom you can love. Think of having lost hope, of never expecting any change for the better, of knowing that to-morrow will be exactly like to-day, and to-day the greatest misery that you could dream of in this life! What wretchedness to have nothing good around you, none to sympathize with and support you in your punishment, none whom you can trust or respect; all beings loathsome in the blackness of sin! Think of this living death for eternity! If you were on earth you would say, 'I cannot live in such torture, it must soon kill me; and you would look forward to the peace of the grave as your consolation. In hell there is no death; there you finish your threescore years and ten and still live on, multiplying those seventy years by tens, by thousands, by millions, and still being only as if you had just begun. Think of eternity in hell, and now picture it in heaven. There are gathered all the pure who have lived on earth. Every one you will speak to there has no blot in his character to hide. You will be sure that each word he utters is perfect truth. You will never there be misunderstood, your religion will not be thought hypocrisy, nor your good actions set down to mercenary motives. There you will

never be doubted, you will be comprehended and appreciated. There you will have nothing to be ashamed of, nothing that you will wish to hide from your friends, and no secret cares that no one knows of to prey upon your spirits. In this world you meet ill-natured people who pretend to be friendly with you, and slander or speak slightingly of you behind your back. In heaven everyone will be a sincere friend. What a blessing to be able to trust but a single person in this world! What happiness then to meet not one unworthy of confidence! How sweet must it be to have nothing to regret! Each night here, when we go to bed, we can think of something done during the day which we would have undone. In heaven we shall never do one thing that we shall have cause to sorrow for. If you had a friend whose character was so lovely that you could never detect in him the slightest fault; if you were in the habit after every sinful fall of going to him to be lifted up again; if in troubles you ran to him for comfort, and in difficulties sought his advice; and if this friend, who was all in all to you, loved you better than his own life, would not your devotion to him be something wonderful? You would be tortured, cut to pieces for his sake; your love for him would be unspeakable. Think, then, of being permitted to live with such a friend for ever, and you will understand the happiness of saints in heaven who live with Jesus.

"Oh! Mr. Stanley, how can you live on without being sure that you are saved! If I did not know for certain that I should go to heaven, I should keep all day in my room for fear of death; I should be

afraid to go down stairs lest I should slip and break my neck; I should be afraid to cross the road lest a carriage should run over me; I should fancy the air full of fever ready to carry me off; and every death I heard of would make me shudder. But knowing that death is but the dark river that separates me from Jesus, I do not dread it; and you cannot think what a blessing it is not to fear to die; it is such a comfort not to be nervous about every little ailment, but when you are sick to be able calmly to put your life in God's hands. Three years ago, my uncle took me on the continent for my health. In crossing the Alps the diligence got off the beaten path, and we were on the point of being hurled over a precipice. The passengers were wild with terror. My uncle quietly took my hand, looked at me and smiled; oh! so sweetly! He told me afterwards that he thought destruction certain. He is a good man, better perhaps than he seems to be, and at that fearful moment he had the true Christian's feeling; death seemed gain. Mr. Stanley, I may never have an opportunity of speaking to you more; promise me that you will try to believe in Jesus, say at least that you will pray for help. Do not, do not die without an effort to save yourself!"

"Oh! that I could have you to be my guide always!" exclaimed Stanley passionately. "If I had you to come to for counsel I should soon become a saint!"

So enrapt was Edith in her one idea of saving his soul, that she did not perceive the worldly drift of this speech, but told him that she too wished fer-

vently that she could help him more. To what his feelings might have led him after this seeming encouragement, it is impossible to say; for at this moment Mr. Travers made his appearance, and began congratulating him on the success of his morning's labour. No opportunity occurred during the day for another private interview; for, having to start next morning long before Edith got up, he had to pay his adieux before going to the ball.

"You look uncommonly stiff both of you in your swallows and chokers," said Mr. Travers, as the young men entered the room after accomplishing their toilet. "Look at Willie, stealthily arranging that particular little curl; he is convinced that a bit of hair adjusted exactly at that spot is a vast improvement on the same two inches back."

"What do you mean, sir, by being such a puppy?" he asked, turning to his nephew with affected severity.

Willie blushed at having his vanity exposed, but tried to laugh it off.

"And you, of course, are not vain?" said Mr. Travers, addressing Stanley. "And yet I'll be bound that before entering the ball-room you will give your whiskers a pull, or run your fingers through your hair. Of course you will, sir, it's a young man's natural instinct. We are very intimate with our own faces, and imagine every one else to be equally so. A manipulation of the hair when a man takes off his hat, wonderfully improves his looks in his own eyes, whilst in the eyes of others it makes no difference in his face whatever. Who of the guests to-night, my dear Willie, will know if that curl is in its proper

place, or if your friend's whiskers have received their final elongation ?"

"I am glad to be out of the scrape this time," said Edith, laughing; "I have no whiskers to titivate, or stray locks to arrange."

"And yet I'll answer for it, mademoiselle, that you have theories that no one knows of connected with minute details of your face," said Mr. Travers. "You have certain ideas of what is becoming and unbecoming, which none but yourself can understand. I dare say, like the rest of girls, you imagine that every one is on the look-out for some blemish in your exterior, and can instantly detect the most microscopic flaw." "Now I have had a hit at you all in turn, and am profoundly happy," he added laughing. "You two young men be off to the ball as quick as you please, and leave Edith to me to be teased for the evening."

Stanley wished with all his heart to stay at home also in the society of her he loved, and he would have given up the ball could he have found any reasonable pretext for so doing; but having at the beginning of his visit unthinkingly accepted the invitation, and owned that he was particularly fond of dancing, he could not afterwards excuse himself from fulfilling his engagement. And so on his last evening the chance of another *tête à tête* with Edith was thrown away. He pressed her hand fervently as he bade her good bye; and after thanking Mr. Travers for his hospitality, turned out with Willie into the dark night, and made his way to the ball-room with a heavy heart.

Little conversation did his partner get out of him during the first dance, his mind was occupied with other things. "Can she indeed love me?" he thought. "She must have known what I meant by wishing to have her always near me; and yet, instead of repulsing me, crushing me by a word or look as I thought she would, she gave a sort of half assent, and looked at me so pitifully and lovingly that, if her uncle had not come up, my love must have exploded. Heigho! when this confounded dance is over I will go to the refreshment-room and drown my sorrows in champagne.

Mr. Travers was reading in his study, and Edith was in the drawing-room putting away her work preparatory to going to bed, when she heard the front door open and some one softly ascending the stairs. The next moment she started back in astonishment at the sight of Stanley!

"What has happened?" she asked anxiously. "Are you ill? or is anything the matter with Willie?"

"Nothing is wrong," he answered; "don't alarm yourself. The room was hot, I was bored to death, and—and—it's of no use beating about the bush, I must say it! Miss Travers, a sudden impulse that I could not resist urged me to come home and speak to you. I have hitherto tried to conceal my love, because I have never seen a chance of your returning it. To-day you first encouraged me to hope. I can hide my feelings no longer—Oh, Miss Travers! —Edith! have pity on me—I love you! I am unworthy of you in every way; I am as a beast before an angel; but your love can purify me; you can raise me

to your level. Oh, let the depth of my affection cover my faults! You will never meet with such love as mine. My sins have some excuse. From my childhood I have lived with men; my mother died when I was an infant; I have never had the teaching of a good woman to shield me through life. Yours is the first pure mind that I have known—my future, body and soul, depends on you. When with you, I feel that I am not really an infidel; I could believe if I dared to think; but faith without your guidance would be condemnation, for alone I could not reform. Edith, without you I can never know happiness; darken not my whole life by a refusal of my love. Be my wife, Edith!—darling Edith! Be my wife!" He grasped her hand as in a vice in the fervour of his passion, and paused for a reply.

So unexpected was his appearance, and this sudden outburst of fierce love, that Edith had listened to his words as one half stunned. As his vehemence increased she grew frightened, and now she said indignantly, "Let me go, Mr. Stanley! you hurt me dreadfully; you have no right to treat me in this way; it is ungentlemanly!"

Stanley released her instantly, and stood before her with his head bent, pale and silent, like a criminal waiting his doom. Edith was touched by the submissiveness of his despair, and she said gently, "I wish to wound you as little as I can; but you must know what my answer will be. I could never love you. Stay," she added, as he made a hasty movement towards the door. "Please listen to me. You said that this morning I gave you some encourage-

ment; what it was that you misconstrued I cannot tell. You will not, I am sure, accuse me of trifling with your affections; you cannot think so meanly of me as that. But if, in my anxiety to do you good, I have shown myself in an unintentionally false light, I beg you to forgive me. I had no idea that you regarded me as more than a friend; I thought nothing of your feelings towards myself; my whole mind was bent on winning your soul to God. I am deeply grieved to have made you unhappy, you will forgive me, will you not?" and she held out her hand beseechingly.

Stanley raised it to his lips, imprinted on it one long, passionate kiss, and hurried out of the room.

The next morning he went up to town by the early train without seeing anyone in the house, and stopped in London instead of going on to Scotland. He had determined to leave the country; he cared not where he went, but the hospital and all connected with it he swore never to see again. He was desperate; and as he walked the streets felt hilarious in his recklessness, and inclined to swing his arms and sing.

"I propose to be jolly this morning, screwed this afternoon, and dead drunk this evening," he coolly observed to the landlord on entering a well-known tavern.

"A laudable resolution, my dear fellow!" said a voice at his elbow. It was Pierson of St. Augustin's, who gave the convivial party to commemorate his having finished his student's career.

"Hulloh!" exclaimed Stanley. "What are you

doing here? I thought you were in the depths of sea-sickness, *en route* for the Antipodes!"

"I delayed my journey on account of some business matters; but I am booked to start three days hence. I have paid my passage to New Zealand, bought my outfit and every necessary, and in a few months I shall be curing the settlers, and settling the Maories.

"You don't happen to want a partner?" asked Stanley. Pierson looked at him enquiringly.

"The fact is," said Stanley, "I am longing to get out of England, and I don't care where I go, or what I do. I had as soon go to New Zealand as to Paris, all places are alike to me. If you will have me, I can scrape up enough money for the journey; and the governor will be sure to dub out handsomely when he finds me gone. Let us have a bottle of wine and talk it over."

The result of the conversation was the engagement of another berth in the good ship *Salamis*. Stanley was engaged to go.

"If I find that without a diploma I can't get on in practice," he said to Pierson, "I shall cut the profession and turn sheep-farmer. If I don't succeed in farming, I'll become a billiard-marker, and if that fails, I will black boots. Once out of this cursed country, and how I live doesn't matter a jot."

CHAPTER XV.

A MEDICAL STUDENT TURNS AUTHOR; HIS COMPOSITION, AND THE FATE IT MEETS WITH.

AFTER Stanley's departure, holiday time began to drag heavily on Willie's hands. His pecuniary difficulties were a source of great anxiety to him; for he still owed a good deal of money, and did not see any means of paying it. His uncle allowed him a sum sufficient for all necessaries, and he had already given him something extra; so Willie felt that no further petition must be made in that quarter. After trying for a long time to devise some expedient to relieve his embarrassments, he came to the conclusion that he would write a story and send it to a magazine. He knew a friend who had done this, and received liberal payment; and what his friend could do, he imagined he could do. He would write a short tale first, he thought, and if he were well paid for his trouble, he would compose a series of light sketches, and become a regular contributor. The more he considered his plan, the better it appeared. Visions of becoming a celebrated novelist rose before his eyes; he pictured people pointing at him and whispering, "Don't you know who that is? Why that's Travers—*the* Travers

you know, who wrote ——." As three months ago he was about to astonish the public mind by his researches in science, so now he proposed to amuse mankind by his light literature.

Edith was taken into his confidence, and highly approved of his design. She promised to be his amanuensis and transcribe his rough copies, and was delighted to find her services in requisition. Enough manuscript paper was bought to serve for a dozen three-volume novels. A sufficient stock of quills and magnum bonums was laid in to supply a prosperous insurance office for a couple of years. An elegantly flowered blotting case, a patent inkstand, a pint bottle of indelible ink, and half a dozen pencils made up all that was thought necessary for the embryo author.

Mr. Travers knew nothing of these proceedings, for the profoundest secrecy was observed. All the tools of Willie's new trade were conveyed to his bedroom; and there, seated at his dressing-table before a huge desk, he baited his first hook to catch an original idea. For a long time he remained in the deepest thought, without writing a line. Then a page was rapidly scrawled, half a dozen erasures made, and the pen finally dashed through the whole.

After this failure he sat grim and inky, with his eyes fixed steadfastly on a cobweb in the corner. The spider's ingenuity seemed to be contagious; for he suddenly ceased staring, and again began to write, this time perseveringly, though with frequent long stoppages and recourse to the inspiring cobweb. After a time his pen moved more freely; and from

his excited looks he appeared to have got into the thread of the story. Sheet after sheet was finished; hour after hour elapsed; and at last he descended radiantly to Edith, MS. in hand; and, speaking in a hushed whisper as if he were a modern Guy Faux, said, "I have finished it; come into my bedroom, where we shall be safe, and I will read it aloud."

The Story. Part I.

"On the sofa, in a little drawing-room, Dick and Amy sit hand-in-hand. Five minutes ago Dick asked a short question, requiring simply yes or no: Amy chose the first, and so they sit lovingly hand-in-hand.

"'We are very young, Dick dear.'

"'I don't see that,' replied Dick; 'I am of age, and you are eighteen: we might marry in a year.'

"'But, my dear boy, we have got no money: at least you have only your two thousand pounds.'

"'There is my profession, you forget that. Engineering is a first-rate thing to make money in, if you only get high in it.'

"'But, Dick dear, you don't get high in it; and you said the other day that it was all "bosh"—(I think that was the word you used), and that you should never make a penny.'

"'My darling, when we are married I shall work at it like a trooper. I shall have got over the practical part by then: that is awful. They actually make us gentlemen dress like engine drivers, and work like blacksmiths. However, I am glad to say we shan't depend altogether upon my profession.'

"'Why, Dick, your two thousand pounds won't go far.'

"'No, I know that; but between you and me, Amy, I have got a small speculation on hand that is likely to multiply my two thousand by five.'

"'Isn't speculating the same as gambling?' asked Amy innocently.

"'No, certainly not,' returned Dick quickly: 'who put that into your little head? Don't you know that gambling is playing with dice? And besides, mine isn't an ordinary speculation,' he added, getting rather red.

"'I wish you would tell me, dear; I am sure you might trust me,' said Amy plaintively.

"'My dearest girl, you wouldn't understand a word, if I told you. The fact is that I really don't mind your knowing, but I can't tell you without telling your mamma; and women who manage their own money matters are so prejudiced on these subjects, that she would be certain to cry out directly about risk, or something of that sort.'

"'I wish papa were alive, and then you could tell him.'

"Dick assented, but rather doubtfully. There was a short pause, and then Dick said, 'Amy, dearest, I wish you would go and tell your mother about our engagement, I shirk it so awfully.'

"'I am sure I do too; I don't know what I shall say. Oh! if she were to say it must not be.'

"'By Jove! here comes the old lady,' said Dick, in a nervous whisper.

"The door opens and admits the 'old lady,' who is

not so particularly old either, forty or thereabouts at the outside. She comes in quietly, shows no astonishment at finding the young man there, but shakes hands with him, and is about to begin an ordinary conversation, when she suddenly finds her daughter's arms round her neck, and her daughter's pretty little head buried in the maternal bosom.

"'He,' sobbed Amy, evidently referring to the uncomfortable-looking Dick; 'has—sob—asked me —sob, sob—to be—mamma!'

"'There, there; yes, I see, dear,' said Mrs. Palmer soothingly. 'Dick has asked you to be his wife; that is what you mean, is it not, dear?'

"'Yes—s,' murmured Amy, still *in profundis* as to her face.

"'And you have accepted him, of course,' said her mother. 'Now come and sit down comfortably, and we three will talk it over. Brighten up, my little girl, and you too, Dick,' she added, turning to that gentleman, who looked uncommonly near crying also. 'You pay me a very bad compliment by your dismal looks; I am not such a terribly harsh mother; am I, Amy?'

"'Amy raised her head and smiled through her tears, then opened her lips as if to speak; but, suddenly changing her mind, fell into such a paroxysm of kissing that not a feature of her mother's face escaped the infliction. Appearing tranquillized and refreshed thereby, she suffered herself to be led to the sofa and re-seated; and, soon after, so far recovered herself as to take Dick's hand slily and give it a great squeeze.'

"'Now my children,' said Mrs. Palmer, 'for you are neither of you anything more,—(here a slight grunt of dissatisfaction shows that Dick does not entirely coincide)—the question is, what have you got to live on? Yes, I know, Dick, what you are going to say; you have your two thousand pounds, a sum certainly not to be despised, yet not altogether sufficient as capital for a married couple. Don't interrupt me, if you please,' she added, seeing that Dick was labouring to speak. 'You want to tell me about your profession; I was coming to that. Your profession is, of course, what you will mainly have to depend upon; and with your abilities, Dick, you ought to do well in it; that is, if you persevere, which, up to this time, I am sorry to say, you certainly have not done.'

"Dick again perceived to be struggling, but is unregarded. 'Your proposal to Amy is no surprise to me: I have seen for some time that you were attached to her; and had I not approved, I should have forbidden you the house. Instead of doing this, I have considered carefully the means of making you both happy. I shall be able to allow Amy fifty pounds a year, but not more; and Mr. Curtis, our stockbroker, has proposed a safe investment for your money, which will pay seven per cent. One moment more, Dick, and then I shall be happy to listen to what you have to say. Two thousand pounds at seven per cent. is £140, and with my allowance to Amy, there is £190 per annum. When you are making a hundred a year by your profession, you can marry. You are both exceedingly young, and

can well afford to wait some years; and the time of probation will be a good test for you both. Now Dick, what do you wish to say?'

"Dick, for some reason, now that he is permitted to speak, appears incapable of saying anything.

"'I want to know what you think of my plan," said Mrs. Palmer.'

"'I am sure,' said Dick, 'it's very kind of you, very kind indeed; and I like it all amazingly, except——'

"'Except what?' said Mrs. Palmer encouragingly.

"'The investment,' he blurted out; 'I don't like that at all.'

"'Don't like to get seven per cent. for your money! Perhaps you think it is not safe? I assure you on that point you may rely implicitly on Mr. Curtis.'

"'No, no; it isn't that; I have no doubt it is safe enough; but the fact is—the fact is,' stammered Dick, blushing very much, 'I have already put into a better thing.'

"'I am extremely glad to hear it. I really half imagined from your manner, that you were going to say you had spent it, or done something very foolish. Your uncle's stockbroker advised you, I suppose. I hope he is a prudent man; I would sooner trust to Mr. Curtis. You are certain there is no risk?'

"'Oh, no; there is no risk,' replied Dick; 'at least no more than there is in everything above four per cent.; and it isn't exactly an investment, but——' What he might have said further, Mrs. Palmer was prevented hearing by the announcement of a visitor.

"'You can tell me all about it another time,' she said; 'and now I will leave you to talk to Amy, for I dare say you are both wishing me gone;' and with a kiss to Amy, and a cordial shake of the hand to Dick, she left them to themselves.

"'Oh Dick, I am so very, very happy!'

"'My darling, so am I—happier than I have ever been in all my life, Amy; your mother behaved like a trump.'

"'Yes, wasn't she good! I don't know why I should have felt so frightened. And Dick, dear, you did really look so——'

"'So what? What on earth are you laughing at?'

"'So sheepish, Dick; you did indeed.' An interruption to the conversation here ensues, whilst Dick administers proper punishment.

"'Dick, dear,' said Amy thoughtfully, 'are you quite sure that you haven't made a mistake?'

"'Why, what mistake could I make?'

"'Are you certain that you like me well enough to marry?'

"'Why, you ridiculous little thing; of course I do,' said Dick, laughing.

"'Remember what it is,' she said, looking up into his face with her earnest eyes; 'for better for worse, for richer for poorer, till death us do part.'

"'Till death us do part,' repeated Dick solemnly.

"'Life is very short, Dick, dear; only a few years hence, and I shall be grey, and old, and ugly. Can you fancy me like this?'

"'No I can't,' said Dick, flatly.

"'If you can't, you won't love me when the time comes. If you only like me now because I am pretty —at least you know you say I am—when I have lost my good looks you will be sorry that you ever married me.'

"'My own poor little pet, if you could be as ugly as fifty old witches I should still love you for your own sweet self.'

"'Oh, Dick!' she said, laughing, 'I shan't be quite so bad as that; but I am glad you love me for myself, and not for what I look like.'

"Thus they sit and talk, whilst the sun turns deep red, flickers, and goes down; and the pale moon takes its place, and sheds a ghostly light upon the little room. So they prattle on, caring for nothing in the world but their own two selves, opening to each other the mysteries of their young hearts, and twining together their thoughts, and hopes, and fears, to be disunited—never.

Part II.

"'I tell you, Golding, we must win!' exclaimed Frank Davidson, almost angrily. 'I took the trouble to go to the Hyde Park trees yesterday to see Smith the bookmaker, and he says he only wishes his book were like ours. Why, it's a downright impossibility to lose!'

"'I daresay you are right,' answered Dick, tremulously; 'but I can't help feeling nervous. It isn't as if I had a rich father like you; but you see I am an

orphan, and it's every farthing I have in the world. If it did go against us—there's poor Amy, she would break her heart. Our engagement would be all over then! Oh! Frank, I can't bear to think of it; she might die if it were broken off!'

"'Come, Dick, this is downright nonsense; cheer up, man alive! Why, you will soon be touching that seven per cent. you told me of for a heap of money. I shall be at your wedding before another year is out.'

"'I should blow my brains out,' said Dick, dismally, 'if anything went wrong. We can't be sure—if the favourite were to win! I feel a presentiment about it.'

"'The favourite has no more chance than a rank outsider, the last in the list! Every 'cute man on the turf, who is in the secret, is laying all he can against him. I only wonder he keeps his place in the betting.'

"'I know you understand these things better than I do,' said Dick, humbly; 'but it seems rather queer that the horse should be supported so strongly if there is anything against him.'

"'It's ten to one,' replied Frank, 'that the favourite isn't even placed. Tartar is as safe for this race as if he were going to run alone. I wish to goodness we had put more money on him when the odds were greater; the bookmakers are getting preciously shy now, I can tell you.'

"'For my part,' said Dick, gloomily, 'I wish one thing with all my heart; and that is, that I had never meddled with horse-racing at all. I have been

thoroughly wretched ever since I made the bets; and, if I win, I don't believe I shall feel the least satisfaction in the money.'

"'Well, of all the ungrateful fellows,' retorted Frank, passionately, 'you are the worst! Here have I been working like a galley slave, getting information about all the horses, showering gold right and left upon ostlers, grooms, legs, and vagabonds, calculating all the chances, and listening to every report, false or true — and there have you been spooning away the whole time, and never troubling yourself in the least, leaving all the burden and anxiety of the thing to me—and now to turn round and say you are sorry you didn't back out at first! I say it's not friendly, it's not — gentlemanly! and that's all about it;' and Frank began to pace the room and look very fierce indeed.

"Dick, with his elbows on the table and his head resting between his two fists, was staring vacantly out of the window; and did not seem at all aware that his companion was angry, but began to speak as if talking to himself.

"'I felt such a hypocrite last night; I hated myself. I had to equivocate, and almost tell a downright lie to prevent Mrs. Palmer finding out. If we hadn't been interrupted, I expect I should have told everything: it did seem so despicable to deceive her when she was so kind."

"'I don't see,' said Frank, mollified by his friend's distress, 'why you should be uneasy about last night. From what you told me I consider that you got out of the cross-questioning uncommonly

well. Won't they be astonished,' he added gaily, 'when you tell them quietly that you should like old Curtis to invest ten thousand for you.'

"'By Jove, they will indeed!' said Dick, recovering his spirits.

"'And then you needn't bother much about your profession, when you have a good bit of the needful to fall back upon.'

"'I'll tell you what I will do,' said Dick, eagerly; 'I will live as economically as possible till I am married, and all the extra saved shall go for furniture; and I will pay ready money for it, so that we may begin housekeeping without being in debt; won't it be glorious?'

"'It will indeed,' replied Frank; 'but don't forget old friends in your prosperity; remember who gave you the tip to win the money. But we must not go on gossiping like this any longer, if we are to be at Epsom to-morrow. I can't do without seven hours' sleep at the least, so I shall leave you to dream of the future alone, and tumble off to my room to bed. It's all right about the hansom to take us down; I have picked the best horse I could find. Good night; sleep well, and for goodness' sake don't get into the blues again;' and Frank Davidson took himself off to bed.'

THE DERBY.

"Frank Davidson and Dick have a good place near the winning post. The great event is about to come off. Frank is very hot, very red, and much excited. Dick has his lips pressed together, and is deadly pale.

"All is not as it should be; for Frank has been in the ring, and discovered the betting to be not so free as before against the favourite. Rumours are about that Tartar behaved badly in a previous canter; and that young Brix, the best jockey on the turf, is not going to ride him after all. However, the opinion of Frank's friend, the great bookmaker, is, that Tartar is bound to win easily, come what may. This is comforting, but does not altogether make the race as good a thing as it seemed the day before; therefore Frank is a little anxious, and Dick intensely so.

"'Red and yellow is our colour,' whispered Frank, looking at his card; 'white and blue the favourite's. They will be off directly. You look awfully ill!' he added, catching sight of his companion's face.

"'Have some brandy? I have got my flask."

"'No, not a drop, thank you,' said Dick; 'I'm all right, it is only nervousness. I wish to goodness they would be quick!' he exclaimed, wiping off the perspiration which was standing in great drops upon his forehead! 'I can't endure this suspense much longer; my brain feels like red-hot iron!'

"'They are off!' shouted Frank. 'Now then, if red and yellow passes first, we win!'

"'I can't look,' said Dick; 'tell me.'

"'All right, keep your pluck up. They are coming! I can't see the colours yet. Yes, it is! it is! Red and yellow first! and no! it can't be, Dick! it is a neck-and-neck race between Tartar and the favourite!'

"A moment more and the two noble animals swept past, each with outstretched neck and eyes,

starting from their sockets, whilst every muscle bulged beneath its glossy covering, like a knotted cord. Another instant, and the great race is over. ——*The favourite has won by half a neck.*

"Frank turns round to his friend in speechless agony. Dick is gone.

"It is the morning after the Derby; that morning when winners wake with fevered brain and parched throat, and call impatiently for soda and brandy, small beer, or hock and seltzer water:—when losers wake, some to curse their folly and swear to bet no more, some to find their means pinched for life, and others to know that the very bread is taken from their children's mouths, and that they themselves are ruined and degraded for the rest of life:—when the non-betters wake to discover their digestion wrong, their temper wrong, and everything wrong; and as they go, each to his office, his shop, or his study, to agree in heartily confounding yesterday and all connected with it.

"On this morning of general discontent, Amy wakes, and looks very pretty as she sits up in bed and smiles. She is thinking of Dick, and expecting a good two hours of love; for he has promised to come after breakfast. She dresses, goes down stairs, and finds a letter in her plate: it is from Dick. She opens the envelope and begins to read.

"The note runs thus:—

"'Amy! I have lost all! lost it by own sinful madness—the Derby, you know, yesterday! Amy, my darling Amy, I write to say good-bye for ever. I am almost dead with grief. Forgive me, pray

forgive me, but never, never think of me more. I am going abroad, right away! Amy, I can hardly write it; but I want you to take some one else, who will be worthy of you. You must forget me altogether; you must indeed. I am gone, I am dead! Darling, I know you will, you do forgive me. Say once out loud—"God bless you, Dick." I am so very, very miserable.

"'RICHARD GOLDING.'

"Amy read this incoherency through to the last word, put the letter in her pocket, said distinctly, 'God bless you, Dick,' and became insensible.

PART III. DERBY DAY TEN YEARS AFTER.

"In the coffee-room of an hotel in Covent Garden, a bronzed, bearded man is reading the *Times;* at least, to the white-chokered, black-coated waiter he appears to be so doing, for his eyes are intently fixed on a leading article about foreign policy, and his lips move occasionally as if uttering his approval of the writer's sentiments. The waiter sees nothing surprising in persons being absorbed in, or even ejaculating over, their morning paper; so that he pays little attention to the reader. Yet, could he hear the disjointed words dropped every now and then by the brown-faced gentleman, he would not only find some difficulty in connecting them with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, but might—if such a thing be possible in a well-bred waiter—have even his curiosity roused.

"'Amy, darling—ten years faithful! I dare not to-day!' Such words as these are muttered, and then the gentleman brings his fist down on the table

with a prodigious bang, and exclaims aloud, 'I will!—I will go to-day!'

"Obsequious garçon, imagining that he is addressed, instantly replies in jerks, 'Go to-day? yes, sir; let y' have bill directly, sir;' whereupon the gentleman appears angry, says that he did not mean that, and wishes the waiter would mind his own business.

"The servant has just brought in the candles, and Amy and her mother sit at the table, working. Mother is much the same in appearance as we saw her ten years ago; a few more grey hairs and an additional wrinkle or two being all the perceptible difference. Daughter is more changed: her face seems longer, and is rather pinched: she has less colour than formerly, and, when not speaking, looks a little careworn; but her soft brown hair, her large grey eyes shaded by their black fringes, and her innocent expression are the same as ever; and when she lights up and talks or laughs, she looks the same loving, childlike Amy that Dick plighted his troth to ten years back.

"'Mamma, dear,' said Amy, 'this is Derby-day, the tenth, you know, since mine —— my fatal one. I wish you would let me talk about Dick to-day.'

"'Don't be so silly, Amy; you will make yourself ill as you did before.'

"Mamma dear, you don't think it silly to talk about Papa who is dead; why won't you let me speak of poor Dick who is dead too?'

"'But Richard Golding is not dead,' remonstrated Mrs. Palmer.

"'He is dead to me,' said Amy softly, 'and I shall never see him again, until I meet him with Papa; then it will be the same as if that day had never been. Oh, mamma! Dick was so good; it was only that once that he went wrong; he was so open, and manly, and kind-hearted, and so very, very fond of me! Do you know, I have had to paste his letter on a piece of foolscap, it was so very ragged and torn: when I die I shall have it buried with me.'

"'Amy, my dear, I wish you would give up talking like this; you only distress yourself unnecessarily.'

"'It doesn't distress me, indeed it does not,' said Amy imploringly. 'I love to talk about him—at least sometimes. Do you remember, mamma dear, when I told you, and we were both so frightened lest you should say no; and then how kind you were, and how we all three sat and talked it over? Oh, mamma!' and she burst into tears. 'I can't help it. That fatal, fatal betting! we might have been so happy now but for that!'

"'And then the woman of fifty years' experience disappears, and the mother shines forth, and takes her only child to her bosom, and rocks her to and fro, and hushes and soothes her as she used to do in years gone by; and Amy has her cry and grows quite calm, and says she will never do it again; and begs to be forgiven; so they get to their work once more and talk; only their subject is no more Dick.

"Presently the servant enters the room with a note.

"'From Mr. Curtis,' said Mrs. Palmer, looking at

the hand-writing; 'about money, I suppose.' She opened and read as follows:—

"'Throgmorton Street.

"'My dear Madam,

"'After the confidential communication that you made to me some years ago, I think it right to inform you that Mr. Richard Golding has returned to England. He has called at my office for the purpose of investing a large sum of money acquired in Australia by sheep-farming. Mr. Golding enquired particularly after both your daughter and yourself.

"'I am, my dear Madam,

"'Yours faithfully,

"'JOSEPH CURTIS.'

"'What is it about?' asked Amy anxiously, 'you look as if something bad had happened; may I see the letter?'

"'No, certainly not,' replied Mrs. Palmer hastily. 'I mean it is not of the least consequence. I shall be back directly,' she added, and hurried from the room.

"'Something dreadful has happened about those shares,' thought Amy. 'Poor mamma, I will go and find her, and make her tell me; two can bear it so much better than one." And she rose to carry out her intention. 'Rat-tat-tat!' from the knocker on the house door. Amy stopped. Somebody is coming up the stairs. Why does Amy turn so deathly white, and press her hand against her side? Somebody turns the handle—somebody opens the door quickly and somebody catches Amy in his arms.

"That evening Dick and Amy sit on the sofa hand in hand as they did ten years ago. Amy is saying, 'No indeed, Dick, not next month; why, I shouldn't be ready even.'

"'Well then, dear, the beginning of the month after; you will, won't you now?' pleads Dick.

"Amy puts her little white hands one on each side of Dick's brown face, gazes half laughing into his big black eyes, and answers, 'Yes, Dick, if you like.'"

Edith thought it beautiful—of course she did, since it was her brother's production. Dick, she said, seemed rather a ninny, and she would not like to live with such a very matter-of-fact female as Mrs. Palmer. But Amy was a dear little thing, and she quite loved her. She doubted if people often made a fortune in ten years, and wished her brother could have made it fifteen. Willie replied that they always did so in books, and declared that he couldn't possibly have made the time longer, because Amy would have been so confoundedly old. "She is twenty-eight already you see," he observed, "and over thirty she would be flat and uninteresting."

This argument being unanswerable, Edith had no more objections to make. As to the story being accepted by the editor, of that she entertained not the slightest doubt. Willie, in her eyes, was such a genius, that the idea of his composition not being good enough for a silly magazine was simply preposterous. The copying must now be done; and she set to work at it with right good will, and laboured until her wrist felt like a rheumatic old woman's, and her

poor little finger and thumb showed two huge dents from the pressure of the pen.

Her task completed, the MS. was rolled up in white satin-paper, bound with a black ribbon, sealed, and directed to the editor's office. Willie posted his treasure himself, dropping it secretly into the letter-box when no one was looking, and peeping in afterwards to make sure that it had reached the bottom without missing its way. He thought that he might possibly have an answer by return of post, but made up his mind not to be disappointed if none came.

None did come; and, notwithstanding his resolution, he was slightly chagrined. But when the next day arrived and the postman brought no answer, and when the day following passed, and the day after that, and still there was no reply, Willie began to fear that something was wrong, that his MS. had been mislaid by the post-office officials, that the editor had met with an accident, or that the magazine had suddenly failed.

Edith suggested patience; she thought it probable that the editor was full of business, and had not time to read the tale; when he had done so he would doubtless reply at once.

A whole fortnight elapsed, and then Willie's composition re-appeared, together with a laconic request in print, that the author would write on one side of the paper only, and inscribe his name and address legibly upon the first page, Edith, ignorant of the requirements of printers, having made her copy after epistolary fashion. Willie raved a good deal, re-read his story; and, comforted by the

satisfaction he derived from its perusal, recovered his complacency, and permitted Edith to make another transcription, this time according to rule. A note was sent with the new copy, humbly begging pardon for transgressing regulations, and requesting a reply as early as possible.

Day after day from this time did Willie rush to the door at the postman's knock, but no letter answered his expectant look. Mr Travers before long found out the secret, and quietly chaffed his nephew on his new conceit. He advised him to try his powers at biography. "Select," he said, "one of your departed friends, and write his life; his not being a hero is wholly immaterial, for a book written on him is quite sufficient to make him one. Put down unblushingly every commonplace observation that you have heard him utter; the veriest trifle becomes wonderfully intensified in print. Publish all his letters, even a note to his washerwoman. If he has ever made a joke, in relating it, never state, 'He once said so and so,' but always, 'He was in the habit of saying,' as if he repeated his facetiæ two or three times daily. If he never distinguished himself at school or college, lay great stress upon the fact; geniuses never shine in ordinary learning, they are too original to read. Let his portrait grace the title-page, and take care that his hair appears as if he never brushed it; for a proper hero in pictures always scorns a parting.

"But your talent, you think, lies in knocking off light articles. In what time, may I ask, did you 'knock off' the first page of your late effusion? Not

quite two hours! You don't say so! your facility of composition is really marvellous, and the result of so sudden an inspiration must have been brilliant. Your introductory sentences must be worth reading."

Assaulted in this way on every opportunity, Willie was not sorry when the hospital session recommenced, and obliged him to return to town. On calling at Stanley's lodgings, the landlady said that his friend had gone in a ship to some foreign place, where she couldn't exactly say, but she knew it was a long way off, and that he didn't intend coming back no more. Willie was astounded at this intelligence; and some days after, meeting a friend of Pierson's, heard the whole story of Stanley's departure. Several things made him suspect the truth; he had noticed Stanley's admiration of his sister, and fancied that she did not care for him. She acknowledged having seen him on his return from the ball, and seemed embarrassed at being questioned. "Edith evidently refused him on that last evening," he thought, "and the poor fellow has gone away heart-broken in consequence."

He wrote to his sister directly, told her his suspicions, and asked for an explanation.

Edith replied by a candid confession of what had occurred. She was deeply grieved to be the cause of his exile, but she was sure that Willie would not wish her to have acted otherwise than she did.

To this Willie acquiesced; he sincerely regretted the loss of his friend—though he could not help expecting that he would turn up again soon—but he felt that however much he liked him as a companion, the

last thing that he would desire would be to have him for a brother-in-law.

After waiting the editor's answer for six weeks, a letter was forwarded to Willie from home. He tore it open, trembling with eagerness. The MS. was rejected.

This was Willie's first and last essay at light literature; Edith still preserves his tale in a drawer sacred to relics of the past.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DRUNKEN COBBLER REFORMED BY SINGULAR MEANS, AND AN UNFORTUNATE GIRL REDEEMED FROM VICE.

REGULARLY every Sunday Edith persevered at the Sunday School; Willie acting as her escort on these occasions, though not with a good grace; for he disapproved of her associations with dirty children, and would draw caricatures of teacher and class, and try by every means in his power to laugh her out of her undertaking. She bore his ridicule good-temperedly, and remained firm to her purpose; and, although she found great obstacles to contend with in her teachings, yet by undeviating kindness and long forbearance she succeeded after a time in winning her pupils' affections; and, having gained their love, by love ruled them. Her class was now her greatest delight: to watch her pupils' souls growing week by week in heavenly grace, and under her care becoming surer of a welcome to their Father's house—was a never-failing source of joy. To think she had found them rude and ignorant, offering a fertile soil for the seeds of vice; that by her teaching they had become Christian children, making their homes happy, and drawing their parents nearer to God—was a meditation that she dearly loved. And she knew that at the last

day, when the trumpet's note should summon her before the great white throne, there to be judged according to her deeds; these little ones would bear her witness that she had used her talents well. Ernest had helped her much, assisting her in all her difficulties, telling her the best way of explaining this or that passage of Scripture; advising her as to the sort of teaching best calculated to impress young minds; calling upon her pupils at their houses, and talking to them as from long experience he knew would touch their hearts; and Edith, in her humility, attributed her success wholly to him; and looking up to him as her guide and helper, she had learned to venerate, and—if the truth must be told—to love him, fervently, devotedly, with a love that could never lessen, to be retained until earth's memories were lost in the grave. She knew that he cared not for her, and dared not hope that he would ever do so: she felt that he was too much engrossed in carving out his path to heaven, to give his affections to any earthly object; and she regarded him as so infinitely above herself, that her love was more reverential than passionate in its nature. Generally she was contented to adore in secret, without mourning over the knowledge that she was unbeloved; but sometimes in hours of solitude she grew restive under the yoke, and writhed and struggled to be free; until, wearied with the useless effort, she would yield, and seek comfort in her bondage in a flood of tears. Ever contemplating him, his holiness, charity, and forgetfulness of self, her soul had become the shadow of the soul she loved, his thoughts had become her thoughts, his aim

in life had grown to be her own. She wished to do more good, and was not contented with being useful once a week. So, meeting Ernest after school one Sunday, she asked him if she could not visit amongst the poor. Her uncle, she said, went up to town three or four times a week, and he could take her up with him occasionally, and leave her with Mrs. Matthews, (the friend with whom she stayed on Sundays). If she could do any good in that neighbourhood, she would not fear walking out alone; God, she was sure, would protect her when on a mission of charity.

In answer to this appeal Ernest set her a task: he said, "When you leave Mrs. Matthews' house, turn to the left, enter the second court that leads out of the main street, and ask for Davis, the cobbler; any one there will point out his rooms. The work that I give you will try your courage: Davis is a drunkard; he will not see me; and shuts his door savagely on any missionary who calls. Miss A. gained admission some months ago; he said that he could not refuse a lady an entrance, and was very civil to her. She did him no good; for, though a devoted Christian, she wants tact. You, Miss Travers, I think, have that quality; and would be more likely to influence him than any one I know. He has a daughter living with him, who is being brought up in perfect ignorance. Persuade the old man to send her to school, if you can: Miss A. attempted this, but failed; you, I hope, will succeed. When you have gained the daughter, then attempt to win the father. Have you courage to undertake this work?"

"I don't know, but I will pray for it," answered Edith quietly.

Mr. Davis, or Old Tom, or the Swigster, as the neighbours called him, was not a pleasant object for the eye to dwell on. His hair, short and thin, was peculiar in collecting itself in little bunches, separate cliques who would have nothing to say to one another, who refused to put their forces in friendly combination to cover efficiently the head beneath, but, keeping themselves apart, left intervening spaces of bare scalp as neutral territory. His eyes, like modest young ladies, were blushing and retiring: so uniformly red were they, and sunk so deeply in the orbit, that could he have achieved a prolonged stare upwards without winking, and have been provided with an order in good round text to "pity the poor blind," a comfortable little income might have been secured to him for life. Two front teeth lost in hostilities with an Irishman, through the agency of a quart pot, had transformed a perhaps pleasing smile into an ogrish grin; and therefore, although a jovial fellow, always good for a song and never refusing his liquor, he did not possess that genial expression which is supposed to be characteristic of these virtues.

Mr. Davis, if he were not drunk or better engaged, took a penny's worth of "easy shaving" every Saturday night; and on Sunday morning—provided he did not forget it, or was not indisposed after his harmonic exertions at the Jolly Postboy on the previous evening—cleansed his skin from any slight impurity it might have contracted during the week, by copious ablutions in a pail of water, elevated for convenience on the bedroom chair. Had he been regular in his sacrifice to the god of cleanliness—

who is probably Neptune, since he is always bathing —he would have been on a par in this respect with most of the inhabitants of his district; but unfortunately the obstacles before mentioned did occur, and not unfrequently; and the hebdomadal washers, having the pull over him, maliciously reported that "Swigster Davis 'ad niver 'eerd o' sich a thing as soap and water, and was that awful grimy, no one knew the colour of his whiskers, let alone his skin."

Mr. Davis, we have seen, was by trade a cobbler; he did not himself make boots and shoes; probably he could have done so had he liked, but he did not like; so he limited his abilities to mending what other people had made. A mixture of iron nails and adamantine leather composed the class of boot on which he operated; it seldom wanted renovating, and required some dozen years of walking to wear it out; accordingly it was not profitable to the shoemaker, and, needing repairs so seldom, did not recommend itself as a specialty to the cobbler. Had Davis therefore been industrious and sober he could never have been spoken of as "well to do;" but, constituting as he did an enormous syringe, continually squirting out his earnings and sucking up gin, he was often without money for food or drink; and, but for the kindness of the poor to the poor, cobbler and daughter would have formed the subject of one of those daily uninteresting stories in the newspapers, apathetically read, or hastily skipped,—the hideous tales of "Died from want of food."

Martha Davis, at the time we make her acquain-

tance, was a pretty little slattern of ten years old. She had grubbed through thus much of life in common with the other children of that quarter; romped in the streets in fine weather, and paddled in the gutters in wet; piled oysters into hollow cones, and begged halfpence for their illumination; chalked the pavement into squares, and kicked house tiles through them; clung on to passing vehicles until she was whipped off; played at battledore and shuttlecock until the latter went down an area, and rung the house bell to beg it out; had part shares in the leanest of kittens and the hungriest of curs; wetted herself to the skin by making fountains at the pump, *i.e.*, stuffing up the spout with her hands whilst a confederate plied the handle; let off pieces of paper from the window on gusty days; obtained carrots from kind-hearted market women, and sat on door steps and nibbled them raw; spent any money she could get in shining elephants of gingerbread, treacle bulls-eyes, and acid sticks:—in fact, she had behaved exactly like other street children, and followed the fashion of the juvenile Sallys, Jemimas, Bets, and Polls, who disport themselves in the mud of our great metropolis, without showing any eccentricity whatever.

One morning as old Davis was hard at work hammering a row of ponderously headed nails into a basis of *lignum-vitæ*-like leather; and as his daughter Mattie was seated on a low stool by his side, handing up the implements required—a tap was heard at the door and a young lady walked in. A most extraordinary sight, so the cobbler thought, and so Mattie

thought; but for all that a *bonâ fide* young lady, and not one of a common kind either: no ordinary-looking face did the meshes of her veil reveal, and no every-day figure did her cloak partially display. She walked quietly into the room, and in a pleasant voice said, "How do you do, Mr. Davis?"

Davis responded gruffly that he warn't amiss.

"I am one of the teachers of the Sunday school near here; and, having heard that you have a daughter old enough to learn something, I have come to persuade you to let her join my class. This is the little girl, I suppose," she added, taking the chair which Mattie, after politely dusting with the skirt of her frock, had placed for her near the cobbler.

"Yes, miss, she be," answered the man; she is my darter, and by your leave she is going to remain as such. I've had one gal who's gone to the bad through schoolin', and I intends to keep this one from following after her."

"She could not come to evil through good teaching," remonstrated Edith (for the reader will have recognised her in the visitor.)

"I attributes it entirely to that cause, miss: she was learnt things above her station, got to fancy herself a fine lady in consequence, fell into bad company and I have never seen her since; and I hope I never may."

"I cannot think your daughter's misfortune due to her education; she was taught, I suppose, reading and writing, history and geography, and Bible truths; this sort of knowledge could not have led her astray;

I don't think that you yourself really believe it could."

"I know that it stuck her up, and did her no good; but, even supposing it wasn't the cause of her going wrong, I don't look with none the more favour upon larning. There's this little Mat of mine is well enough now as children go, if she's only let alone. When she ain't playing about, she sits by my side, and helps me all she knows; and she's precious fond of her old father, though he does liquor up a drop too much. If she was to go a schooling all day long, she'd begin to strut about with her chin cocked up, and her brain chock-full of print, and look down upon her poor old father as a reg'lar ignorant beast. I've forgot most of my larning, you see, miss; and I shouldn't like to be crowed over by a brat like her."

"But don't you see, that by keeping your child in ignorance, you bring her up without religion?"

"What's good enough for me is good enough for her," said Davis, shortly. "I get on very well without religion, and so must she."

"Mr. Davis, you must forgive me if I offend you," said Edith, gently; "but I hear that you are a drinking man. Suppose that you knew a young man who had tasted nothing but water, would you entice him to drink spirits, until he had ruined his health and lost reputation?"

"No, miss," replied Davis, indignantly; "I wouldn't do no such thing. I'm bad enough, but not quite so bad as they make me out who say I'd come that game. I drink hard, that I owns; but if I does, I takes the consequences; no one's a right to complain,

if I don't. Lushing brings its own punishment, and I bears it, because I am forced to; I've got into a bad habit, and can't break myself off it; but, before I'd dra' an innocent young chap into my ways, I'd just strangle myself, and that's all about it. I call leading another away the worst of all sins; I ain't a heavy weight of conscience left certainly, but the few grains that's still hanging about me won't let me do that."

"You are committing this very crime with your own child," said Edith, solemnly; "you are leading an irreligious life, and making her do the same. If you will persist in sinning, do not, I pray you, make her ungodly too; do not draw her with you to the destruction to which you are hastening. Have pity on your child; give her the chance of learning what you refuse to know yourself. There is a heaven above, and there is a hell below; let her go up if you yourself will go down."

Davis was staggered at this earnest appeal.

"I never looked at it in that light before," he said, scratching his head, with a puzzled expression.

"Mattie," said Edith, taking the neglected child upon her knee, and putting back the tangled hair from her dirty, but pretty face, "should you like me to teach you a heap of things, and make you a good, clever girl?"

Mattie intimated that such an event would afford her the highest gratification.

"Then you must ask your father to let you go to school."

Mattie looked at her parent as if she doubted how

her interference would be received. She was, however, spared the necessity of pleading her own cause; for Davis, after staring hard at Edith, and regarding the knee transaction with evident pleasure, slowly said, "I don't know, miss, that I've any objection to your taking a spell at her if you are so inclined; only I won't have her in the hands of none other. I don't know who taught my other gal, but they didn't turn her out to rights. I likes your face, miss, and you seem to have got a kind heart; I'll trust Mat to you, but to no one else."

Edith joyfully promised to be her sole instructress. The first step was gained in her scheme of philanthropy, and she rejoiced at her victory.

"You are a good sort, you are, miss," said Davis, approvingly; "and I wish all the female missionaries were like you. There was a lady used to come and see me some months back, who made me regular savage. Directly she come in, she would whip out her Bible, and go through a chapter in a melancholy, business-like way that set me itching. She never explained nothing, and generally chose something from the Old Testament, with a heap of crack-jaw names in it. After this she'd leave me a tract against drunkenness, and hook it. Sometimes she'd come when I was well-nigh starving for a bit of vittles, and she'd give me nothing but a tract; and that ain't the sort of present for a hungry man. There's hundreds like her, miss; they does more harm than good. A missionary, when he pays a visit to a poor chap, should first find out if his stomach's empty; and if it is, he should give him something to fill it there and then,

and begin to talk religion after. If he wants to convert him, let him take care that when he reads, he's understood. You see, miss, the langidge of the Bible ain't what a poor man hears in common talk: it's kinder foreign to him, and wants a deal of explaining when he first begins it. There was a poor friend of mine a-dying not long ago, and I used to go and cheer him up a bit. One day, I met the parson there; he was a-reading the miracle of turning the water into wine, and as he said, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' my friend burst out a-larfing; it seemed such a rum way of addressing one's mother. Now I know'd it was an Eastern custom, and didn't mean nothing uncivil; but the parson never said nothing, he 'eaved a sigh for the depravity of human natur', and went on reading. I don't think you'd do this style of thing, miss, would you?"

"No, indeed, I hope not. The essential part of the Bible is so easy that a child might comprehend it; but, as you say, its expressions often require explanation. You seem to have read your Bible, Mr. Davis; I wonder you are not a better man. I should like to persuade you to give up drinking, as well as to send you daughter to school."

"I daresay you would, miss," said the man, smiling; "but it ain't no good trying, you might as well speak to a block of stone. People has been persuading me for the last fourteen years, and they ain't succeeded yet; and it ain't likely you're going to do it now. The fact is, I'd give it up to-morrow if I could, but I can't; I've tried and tried, made good resolutions over and over again, and always broke them directly

I got a chance. It's my fate to be a drunkard, and I'll go on till I die."

For a long time Edith sat with him, using every argument she could think of to induce him to give up his vice; her efforts were wholly fruitless.

"I've done my best to give it up," he said, "and I've failed. Drink is my natur', and I can't go against natur'."

Edith was therefore obliged to content herself with her partial success; the father seemed a hopeless case, but she had gained the daughter; that was a great point, and she took her leave of the old cobbler with a grateful heart.

She was puzzled how to perform her promise of teaching Mattie wholly herself, as she taught in the school on no day but Sundays: after some thought she resolved to let the little girl come to Crofton three times a week, and instruct her there.

So Mattie began her education; and her teacher found her very low indeed in the pit of ignorance, and did her best to raise her nearer to the light of day; and, by her winning talk and gentle ways, she made the first white spot in the dark ground of the child's heart, and touched in with delicate brush and skilful hand a love for the good and beautiful—affection towards herself. Then, as time went on, the speck of white spread until it had hidden all that was black before; and thus the heart of the little heathen became a fair white page on which to inscribe the things concerning the knowledge and love of God.

Old Davis did not, I am sorry to say, follow his

daughter's example and reform his ways. Numerous five shillings' worth of drunk and disorderly conduct had he bought of the police authorities; and occasionally had pledged his person for ten days in default of payment. He felt, probably, that so meritorious an action as that of allowing his daughter to be rescued from the path of wickedness, deserved some extra license to himself; and so he swore more loudly, fought more fiercely, and drank more deeply than he had ever done before. Poor Mattie got many a beating in his drunken frenzy; though, in his sober moments, he really loved her as much as such a besotted creature could love any one: indeed, when through want of money he was unable to make himself lower than the vilest thing of God's creation, he could be quite companionable and fatherly to the little girl; and, having had a good education, and even been fond of acquiring knowledge — before drink's destroying hand had gripped and pulled him down—he would at such times help her in her studies: but these occasions were, alas! exceptional, and occurred only when abstinence was compulsory. Edith paid him many a visit, going in the mornings, when Mattie said he was sure to be sober. All that could be said likely to effect his reformation she said, but without avail; he constantly made her promises, and as constantly broke them.

"When a chap places liquor that he has paid for, before your eyes, and bids you take first drink; why, you must be made of something harder than flesh and blood to say no. You see, miss, I sings a good song, and I'm good society, so I gets treated; and

when I'm stood to, my resolution just bolts out of the room and slams the door."

At last for the third time he was attacked by *delirium tremens*, and taken to the hospital. A long time was the scale of life and death nicely balanced. Skill, judicious nursing, and an originally strong constitution managed by their united efforts to drop a grain on the right side; and the skeleton, outweighed, went slowly up, and permitted the old cobbler to get back to his house and mend boots and shoes once more.

On the day of his return, Edith visited him: she found him so changed as to be hardly recognisable; no trace of the blear-eyed ruffian she remembered was left now; pale, emaciated, and weak in every limb, he seemed like the spectre of Swigster Davis come to haunt his house.

He told Edith that he thanked God for sparing his life, and declared solemnly that he would never touch a drop of liquor again.

"I have thought of a little plan to strengthen you in your resolve," said Edith; "it came into my head as I walked along; and if you will give your whole mind to its trial, I think it may succeed. I shall give Mattie this sixpence, and send her to get a little gin in a bottle." The cobbler's eyes glistened, and he looked at Edith in amazement. "You will then," she continued, "put the bottle into the cupboard of the room upstairs, and sit down here at your work. Every time that you feel an irresistible longing to go up and drink, remember the fearful fate that you have just escaped, and think of your daughter de-

pendent upon you for daily bread. After two days, bring the bottle down, and place it in the cupboard in this room with yourself: let another day elapse; and then,—if you are still manfully resisting your foe—place the bottle on the table before your eyes, sit opposite to it and work. If you can battle victoriously against this last temptation, none other that you will meet with can have any effect."

Mr. Davis grinned, and said that "if any liquor was within reach he was afeared he'd be at it; howsumever, he'd do his best." So the bottle was placed upstairs, and he began his trial.

The first day there was a terrible struggle; twice he was half-way up the stairs after the coveted dram, and twice he conquered himself and returned without it. The next day was easier; plenty of work had come in, and his thoughts were more fully occupied than on the previous day. After this, Mattie brought the bottle down, and placed it out of sight, but in the same room with him: this ordeal he also safely passed, and arrived at the last clause, the most difficult of all, when the bottle was placed under his very nose.

He worked on at first without looking at it; then he raised his eyes, and as he did so, stopped work. There stood the innocent-looking liquid; it seemed like a little clear water, and yet had killed thousands of strong men; he could almost smell it as he sat; the boot dropped from his hand, and he remained motionless, staring vacantly at the poison as if fascinated, for full half-an-hour. Then he deliberately stretched out his hand, took the bottle and proceeded to uncork it. The cork was tight-fitting and difficult to

extract; he put it into his mouth, gripped it with his back teeth and pulled; it yielded, and came out with a pop. Just then a sweet girl's voice seemed to whisper, "Davis, it will kill you; think of your daughter dependent upon you for daily bread."

With a couple of prodigious bangs with his fist he rammed the cork into its place again, placed the bottle on the table as far from him as possible, picked up the boot, and hammered at its sole with all his might. He had conquered. The remainder of the trial he endured unflinchingly, and in the evening, before going to bed, he carried the bottle into the court and smashed it to atoms on the stone flags.

From this time Swigster Davis was a reformed man; he took the pledge, and kept it sacredly; his business improved, he grew clean in his habits, and at Edith's request he began to go to church. The grim old reprobate in time became an earnest Christian.

Some time after the cobbler's reformation, Mattie came to Edith in great excitement, and said that she had seen her sister. Davis, since his amendment, had often spoken tenderly of his lost daughter; he mourned her as one dead, and touched Edith to the heart by his sorrowful resignation. Until Mattie made the above announcement, nothing had been heard of the unfortunate girl for two years. Mattie said, she had discovered that her sister went every evening to a cheap butcher's not far from her father's house.

On hearing this, a bright thought crossed Edith's mind, and soon grew into a noble resolve. She would meet this girl, speak to her, and implore her to come home. She informed Mattie of her resolution, and

asked her to come to the railway station that evening, and show her the way to the shop mentioned. Then she went directly to her uncle, and told him that she was going out that night on a mission of charity, and probably would not be home till late: did he object to her intention? She could not tell him her errand, and he must not ask questions, but trust her like a dear old uncle as he always did.

Mr. Travers opened his eyes at this communication; told her there were bad people about at night, and she must take care of herself; made various conjectures as to what she was after, and ended by letting her go.

Mattie met her in London as appointed, conducted her to the proposed rendezvous, and waited her sister's appearance in trembling expectation. Edith felt more courageous than she could have thought possible; she had fortified herself for the undertaking by earnest prayer, and heavenly aid did not now desert her.

After some minutes Mattie saw her sister issue from a back street, cross the road, and enter the butcher's shop: she pointed her out instantly to Edith; and, obeying the latter's instructions, withdrew to a distance and left her teacher alone. Poor Edith, as soon as she was by herself, felt her heart thump, thump against her side; she fully realized the difficulty of her undertaking now, and, had she not been spiritually sustained, would at this critical moment have beaten a retreat. There was little time for thought; for the girl, having made her purchase, re-appeared, and walked slowly in her direction.

"Your name is Lizzie Davis, I think?" said Edith

almost in a whisper; for she was so agitated that she could scarcely speak.

The girl started, and regarded her interrogator in amazement; recovering herself at seeing a face entirely unknown to her, she answered haughtily,—"I beg your pardon, you are mistaken, my name is Rose Melville—the name that she went by amongst her companions, and assumed by the poor creature as the grandest she could think of.

Without heeding this evident falsehood, Edith continued—"Your sister Mattie told me that I should meet you here; she came with me and pointed you out."

The girl glanced quickly round in every direction in search of her sister, but Mattie had hidden herself discreetly, and was not detected.

"What do you want?" she asked, impatiently; "you have no business to intrude yourself on me in this manner."

"Lizzie Davis," said Edith, her voice trembling with emotion, "I wish to induce you to come home."

"Ah! I thought that was your little game," answered the girl coarsely. "Now, young lady, whoever you are, I tell you once for all that you are wasting your time; I know my father well enough to guess what sort of reception I'd get if I did come home; but even if he was wishing for me all day long I wouldn't come. No, Miss What's-your-name, with many thanks to you, I've lived a free life too long to begin again working my fingers to the bone. Ah! it's very well for such as you to live at home;

it's easy enough for you to keep a respectable name when you've got everything round you that you want. You've got kind friends, haven't you? Yes! and a house full of comforts? Yes, again! and what you like to eat?—of course you have; and like enough you've got an honest man to love you, and he'll soon give you a house of your own and little children. It ain't difficult for you to keep a good name; if I'd been born like you I'd be an honest girl at this moment, and may be if you had lived in a back court with bad characters and a drunken father, you might be flaunting about the streets like me, and wouldn't be so over eager to respond to your come-homes indeed!"

"Oh! pray do not speak so scornfully; I do so long to help you; my heart yearns towards you; do not repulse me. I know that there is much to excuse you; I know what bad examples you have had at home, and what trials you have been obliged to bear. I do not—I may not judge you, but I may pity you, and this indeed I do."

"Will you go away?" said the girl angrily; "you shan't force your company on me whether I like it or no. If you don't be off this instant I swear I'll call a policeman and give you in charge for obstructing my path. Ah! I thought that would scare you," she added tauntingly, as Edith turned sadly away. "You just tell Mattie from me that if I catch her I'll give her a sound boxing for setting you on to me!" and the wretched girl, having shot this last arrow at her would-be saviour, walked off defiantly.

Sorrowful indeed was Edith as she returned home.

She had been so successful with two of the Davis family that she had fondly hoped to save the third; she had made a signal failure, and was bitterly grieved. Could she do nothing to save this poor lost one? she thought despairingly; must she leave her in Satan's hands without one more effort to rescue her? Another interview—even if she could obtain it—seemed useless with one so hardened; what could she then do more? She could pray for her. Yes, this she would do; morning and evening she would implore God's mercy for her outcast sister: no cold petitions should be offered in her behalf, she would agonize in prayer; perseveringly, earnestly as the Syrophenician woman she would plead, until the Lord, no longer able to deny her, should say—"Great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

After her meeting with Edith, Lizzie Davis no longer patronized the butcher's shop; and for a long time Mattie lost all traces of her. At last one morning she caught sight of her hurrying along one of the principal thoroughfares; and, keeping a good distance behind and carefully eluding observation, the child followed her, watched her enter a back street, stop at a respectable-looking house, open its door with a latch-key, and pass in.

The next day she told Edith what she had seen. Here was an opportunity for another attempt, thought Edith; could she dare to call upon this girl at her own house? No, she felt that her courage was not equal to that step; something must be done, she would think over it and pray over it, and God would

tell her what to do. She did think, and she did pray; and the result of her prayers was that she saw clearly that her duty was to brave all consequences, and try again to bring the wanderer home. So with a stout heart she buckled on her armour of righteousness, and went forth to battle.

Arrived at the house indicated by Mattie as her sister's quarters, she took the precaution to enquire to whom it belonged at a grocer's opposite. The shopman replied that it was the property of a very respectable woman, who had one lodger whom he knew nothing about.

Encouraged by this reply, Edith knocked at the door; and, asking to see the lodger, was shown upstairs. Lizzie Davis was seated at the table working as Edith entered her room: she looked pale and thin, and a bottle of medicine at her elbow showed that she was ill.

She showed but little surprise at seeing Edith, saying coolly,—"So you have come at last; something told me you would find me out. Dear me, how pretty you are!" she added, in a half-admiring, half-scornful tone; "I could not see you properly that night by the street gas."

Edith was so surprised at this singular reception when she had expected a volcano of angry words, that for a moment or two she could not speak.

"Say what you have to say as quick as you can," said the girl impatiently; "I am quite at your mercy, I am too ill to run away or turn you out: pray begin at once and get it over."

The most experienced divine in Edith's place would

have felt his position an embarrassing one; and poor Edith, who, when she entered the room, had been brimming over with all that tongue could say to win this sinner to her Saviour, now felt her mind quite blank: this greeting had frozen her warm sympathies, she knew not what to say, but, casting an imploring look at the obdurate girl, burst into tears. This was probably the wisest course she could have taken. The girl's face softened instantly; the lip that had a moment before curled disdainfully, now quivered as she said,—

"I am sorry to have hurt your feelings, miss; I did not know you'd take it to heart so, or I wouldn't have spoken so hard; you see I've had people talk to me like you before, and they've been so condescending with their 'my poor gals,' and 'my good creatures,' and always made me seem such a low thing, and themselves so high and mighty, that I've took rather a prejudice against such folk; you seem to have got a soft heart, and I beg your pardon. I will listen to what you have to say; but if you've come to persuade me to come home, if you'll take my advice you won't trouble yourself. I'd as lief jump off London Bridge as go back to my father; and as to convincing me otherwise, don't think it, so I tell you plainly.

"You cannot be happy in the life that you are now leading," said Edith, gently.

"Happy!" exclaimed the girl; "how should I be happy? Of course I'm as miserable as can be. Happy, indeed!" she burst out passionately; "ask me if I'd change places with a starved street dog, and I'd answer, yes. Ah! if virtuous women only knew

the lives that such as I lead, they'd pity more than they'd despise us! If they knew how we loathe ourselves, and many a time hide us out of sight and howl with misery! how often for days and days we scarcely taste a morsel, and walk the streets all night without a sixpence for food and shelter! One night, a clergyman stopped me in the streets, and tried to convert me; and when I refused to listen to him he said, 'The average life of you girls is three years; if you persist in sin, you will either have a speedy death, or if your life is spared you will become like that,' and he pointed to a blear-eyed, hideous old hag, who was staggering out of a public-house. I knew that he spoke truth—ah, the truth, to the letter! Dying soon I did not fear, but that old witch's face haunted me for many a night after. It's gin that keeps us girls going; if it weren't for the drop of white satin, the Thames would stink with our bodies. Until six months ago, I never touched it; I thought it beastly; now, I can't do without it: when the awful feelings come over me—the longings to be pure and good—I beg, borrow, or steal a penny if I've got no money, and rush for a drop of gin. I had these feelings when I first met you. The contrast between myself and you, your simple dress and my gaudy finery, your innocent face and my painted cheeks, struck me so keenly, that if I hadn't made myself the fiend I did, I must have thrown myself on the ground and sobbed."

Edith knelt down by her, took her hand, and kissed it. The girl made no resistance; but she turned ghastly white, and an expression of pain crossed her face.

Gazing at her with eyes full of pity, Edith said, 'Lizzie, listen to me. Your father has given up drinking, he is now a sober, hard-working man; your sister is my pupil, and I love her dearly. There is a clean, comfortable home to offer you, and your father is longing for your return; he has reproached himself bitterly for harsh thoughts of you; he laid the blame of your bad life entirely on himself; and when I told him that I had tried to bring you back, he thanked me with tears in his eyes, and said, 'If you ever see her again, tell her from me that she has my free forgiveness; that, if she will return, the past shall be forgotten; and that from my lips she shall never hear one reproach.' And your sister, she too would give anything to have you back; she often speaks of you, and tells me how kind you were to her before you went away. If you will come home, your future shall be as if the past had never been."

"I can't, I can't indeed," said the girl, hoarsely, choking back her tears. "I couldn't bear to face them again if they were ever so kind; no, you are very good, miss, and I'm grateful to you, but I have made my bed and I must lie on it; I can't alter now. Ah, when I think of what I was and what I am, it makes me mad! When I first left school I do believe I was a real Christian. I used to look forward to Sundays because I loved my church; I'd drink in every word of the sermon, and when I came out afterwards I'd feel so heavenly-like that I couldn't bear to speak. Twice a week I used to go to a sweet young lady's house, and sing hymns with some other girls. I never missed my prayers—I

wouldn't have for pounds and pounds; and I used to read Fox's Book of Martyrs, and really long for a time of persecution to come again that I might be burnt at the stake for Jesus. And then I went to service, got amongst bad companions, and all my religion vanished like a puff of smoke; and here I am now, no longer a woman but a thing—a thing to be trodden on and shrunk from like a loathsome worm!"

"Oh, come home then, and you shall again become a pure woman and a holy Christian; you shall again kneel at your bedside and clasp your hands in prayer. You shall lay your head on the pillow with a peaceful heart; and wake in the morning bright and glad, ready and eager for the honest work of the day. Lizzie, my poor girl, will you come?"

The unfortunate girl was weeping violently: convulsive, jerking sobs, shook her whole frame. Edith stole her arm round her neck; laid her cheek against the poor creature's wet, burning face; and whispered "Lizzie, will you come?"

"I will, God help me!" was breathed back in answer.

CHAPTER XVII.

DISSIPATION AND DUNS, A CASE OF HYDROPHOBIA, A NIGHT IN AN EVIL HAUNT, A CONFESSION, AND A LECTURE.

WILLIE, although his chief tempter was absent, did not turn over a new leaf. He had become hopelessly entangled in a bad set of men, and could not free himself. Constantly under evil influences he began to lose all power of resisting temptation; and as time went on he grew more and more dissipated, until he was regarded by all the students as a fast man. He rarely now went to bed before the small hours of the morning, and often the birds were singing as he entered his bedroom for the so-called night.

Pity him as he walks home in the fresh morning air from some scene of riot, as he watches the brown-cheeked milkman trudging along with his jingling cans, and whistling a merry air. Pity him as the market-gardener and his buxom wife drive past him in their pony cart, healthy and happy. Pity him as he meets the early man of business, and contrasts his fresh looks, clean linen, and well polished boots, with the limp, draggled-looking object that he knows himself to be. Pity him as, pale and blear-eyed, he gains his room, staggers to the window, pulls down the

blind with trembling hand, and, shutting out the brilliancy of day, gets between the blankets and strives to sleep, with the sun's golden rays peeping through every chink, torturing his aching eyes, and mocking his attempts to turn day into night. Pity him as, pushing away an untasted breakfast, he turns with feverish thirst to soda and brandy. Pity him as he pores distractedly over a heap of unpaid bills, cursing his own imprudence, and looking forward with trembling to the inevitable exposure that he knows must come. And lastly, pity him as a knock at the door announces an ill-looking person in cotton velvet and shepherd's plaid.

Old Abram had not changed one iota since we first made his acquaintance: his oiliness, his gaudiness, his dirtiness, were as ever. The steel chain and appendages had been redeemed, and occupied their accustomed place. Cunning was still his prevailing expression of countenance; and pounds, shillings and pence his preponderant idea. But though outwardly unchanged, Abram was not his former self; his suavity, his soapiness, and his extreme desire to oblige had vanished; whilst a bullying manner had taken their place.

"Glad to see me, are you?" he said, in answer to Willie's greeting; you look as if you was. I shall be better pleased to see you when you've forked out them shiners. Here's my account for the third time, and the last, let me tell you. Three fives is fifteen; that's three sixes or eighteen; three couple of suits, that's six. You are in my debt, Mr. T., exactly eighteen pound in money, and six suits of clothes

not too much worn. Here's my open hand a-waiting for the money, and here's this carpet-bag a-gaping for the coats and waistcoats; so tip up at once, and I'll make myself scarce in a twinkling."

Willie wished with all his heart that he could "tip up;" but, his purse being empty, and some loose silver all that he had in the world, he could only explain humbly his destitute condition, and tender his apologies. Abram was implacable, and no submissiveness would appease him.

"Now look you here, Mr. T.," he said, "I ain't a-going to be done out of eighteen pound; don't expect I'm such a flat. I've acted fair and honourable by you, and you ain't done as a gentleman should by me. You've come to me and borrowed what you know'd at the time you couldn't pay; and, if that ain't swindling, perhaps you'll tell me what is. Well, I ain't a-going to be swindled; it would take a few hundred students to cheat me. I never has been done yet, and I don't intend to begin now. If my bill ain't settled by this day week, I takes a third-class ticket down to Crofton, and visits a certain respectable gentleman who I think you are acquainted with. I see by your face, Mr. T., that my little excursion ain't to your liking, and I advises you in a friendly way not to let me go. Eighteen pounds in this hand, is the only thing that prevents me making the trip; I'm not particular about the weather, and if any friend of the haristocracy sends me an invite for that day, I shall tell him I'm pre-engaged."

"If you would only be a good fellow, and wait a couple of months——"

"But I jest can't," interrupted the Jew; "this is my last week of waiting, so I tells you for certain; and not another day do you knock out of me, not if you goes down on your marrow-bones. Now take my advice," he added, persuasively; "go and see your uncle yourself; mention that you owes a few pounds to a poor but faithful friend, and you feels uneasy at knowing that he must want his money. Lay it on thick, speak of your friend's generosity with tears in your eyes, and set to work swearing and cursing at yourself till you are black in the face. Come it in this style, and you'll get out of the mess, and keep a certain party from plumping into a family circle, and stating that a beloved relative is nothing more than a swindler."

Having delivered himself of the above ridiculous counsel, as if he considered it a highly practicable mode of proceeding, he announced his intention of returning punctually in a week's time, and took himself and his highly scented bag out of the room.

Willie drew a long breath as his visitor disappeared; but the momentary sensation of relief soon again gave place to apprehension, as he thought of this odious, greasy creature forcing himself upon Mr. Travers, and claiming his money. How could he prevent such a catastrophe? Would any one lend him twenty pounds? No, he knew no one whom he would like to ask; besides, such a loan would not long keep off exposure; he had other debts besides that to the Jew, and several creditors were pressing for their money. Completely bewildered, he saw no loophole for escape.

Another knock at the door made him tremble.

"It's that tobacconist again," he muttered, clenching his teeth; and he was intensely relieved when, instead of a tradesman, a fellow student entered the room.

"Ever seen a case of hydrophobia, Travers?" asked the new comer.

"No," replied Willie, "I would give anything to see one."

"Then come with me to the hospital, and you shall have your wish. I came on purpose to tell you. The man was brought in yesterday; all the symptoms are splendidly marked; and the students are so mad to see him you would think they had caught his complaint."

"You are a brick for telling me; I will go at once."

The physician happened to be paying his patient a visit as Willie entered the ward; a fortunate circumstance, since it enabled the latter to learn the details of the case more fully than he could have done alone. The sick man, the doctor said, was a carpenter, and being "a bit of a sporting character" had kept bull-terriers for fighting. One day he noticed that Bully, the biggest dog, appeared unwell; the animal was fidgetty, would lie down in the yard for a minute or so, and getting up, move to another spot and lie down again. He kept pertinaciously licking and gnawing at one of his paws as if the part pained him, and was in a state of constant thirst, continually drinking from a pail of water: his eyes looked unusually bright, and he squinted slightly. When his

master called him in an ordinary tone he would not come, and when the command was sternly reiterated he obeyed slowly and sulkily. When patted and spoken to kindly, he did not wag his tail or show any responsive affection, but slunk off to a corner the moment that he was permitted to do so. Moreover, he was quarrelsome, snapped at the other dogs, and, if they disturbed him, attacked them fiercely. Becoming unruly, he was locked up in an outhouse. Soon the saliva began to dribble from his mouth, and some sticky stuff clinging to his jaws seemed to annoy him greatly ; he would balance himself on his haunches, and wash his face energetically with his front paws like a rabbit ; and often he would utter a peculiar and dismal howl. Some little time after, his jaw dropped; and he was unable to quench his thirst, the water trickling from his open mouth as fast as he lapped it up. Then his legs lost their power, and he would reel about like a drunken man, and fall with his limbs doubled under him. When near death, his master, to end his sufferings, shot him through the head.

In separating this animal from another dog which he had viciously attacked, the carpenter thought that he had received a bite; the injury must have been very trifling, for he was not certain if he had been bitten or not. The idea did not enter his head until one day, about six weeks after Bully's death, his little finger began to smart, and he noticed that it was slightly swelled. He was sawing at a plank soon after, when his wife came in to speak to him, and accidentally left the workshop door open, causing

a thorough draught. As soon as he felt the current of air, he put his hands to his throat with an expression of intense distress, and exclaimed that he was being strangled. Soon he became thirsty, begged for something to drink, and when some beer was brought to him, shrunk back in horror and would not taste it. All this the physician had learned from the patient's wife. When Willie saw the sufferer, he was raving; talking incessantly, like a person with *delirium tremens;* rolling his eyes from side to side; frothing at the mouth, and blowing and spitting to get rid of the foam. Some medicine was administered by means of a cup with a spout to it; and as he swallowed, the muscles of his neck contracted as if under the stimulus of a galvanic shock; and he remained afterwards sighing and gasping in an extraordinary manner. His legs were partly paralyzed, and he had frightened the patients in the night by getting out of bed; and, not being able to walk, dragging himself along on hands and knees. After relating the case, and directing Willie's attention to the present symptoms, the physician made a few general remarks on hydrophobia, and spoke of the absurd belief that hydrophobic patients become in nature like a dog. He showed that the barking originated in the noisy efforts to get rid of the saliva; and that the desire to go on all fours like a dog, was owing to the paralysis of the lower limbs. He said that hot weather was not the cause of canine madness, and that statistics proved more rabies in winter than in summer; he remarked on the cruelty and uselessness of killing a

dog which had bitten a person, from fear that the beast should go mad; since the death of the animal could make no difference to the result of the bite. He warned his hearers against believing in old women's nostrums as preventives of hydrophobia; and informed them that the majority of persons bitten by mad dogs escaped without any bad symptoms, and these natural recoveries quacks had attributed to their drugs.

As soon as the physician had ceased speaking, one of his listeners clapped Willie on the back, and whispered, "You are the very man I want, I have an order for a box at the theatre to-night; there are three of us going, and we want you to make a fourth. We propose supping at No. 30 afterwards and making a night of it; will you come?"—"Oh, never mind that," he answered, as Willie confessed his want of money. "I will lend you the needful; you would do the same for me if I were hard up. Be at my rooms in time for the theatre; and I guess, stranger, we'll have a tidy evening."

Willie promised to go, and he went. It was a night of awful dissipation. No. 30 was a well-known profligate haunt, and Willie entered it for the first time. He was shocked at what he saw, and for some time stood silent and reserved. Drink, his old enemy, urged him on; a glass of brandy and water led him to join the rest; and soon he was the noisiest reveller there.

A quarrel arose, and the combatants were pushed into the street to fight it out; the drunken crew accompanying them to see fair play. The police

came up, a large crowd collected, and a general scrimmage ensued. Willie made his escape and gained a back street, whilst his companions made off in different directions, he knew not where. He wandered about until he thought the disturbance had ceased, and then endeavoured to retrace his steps to the infamous house he had left; but he found himself unable again to find the street; and, after a time, giving up the search as useless, he set to work to find some other amusement.

We must now leave him for a moment to glance at Ernest Graham; he, too, at this late hour, was up and abroad. It was one of his work nights. One night in the week he devoted to the visiting of dens of infamy, and attempting the rescue of those least hardened in crime. At many of these places he could not gain admission, but the more openly conducted he could enter without attracting observation. Intuitively he could detect those likely to listen to him; from long experience he knew the sorrowful and repentant at a glance, and could distinguish those who had most recently commenced their bad career. . These were the darkest hours of his life, and in them he endured a weekly martyrdom. The ridicule and abuse he met with he could bear; but the sickly atmosphere of sin, and the foul contact with human nature in its most degraded form tried his fortitude to the utmost.

To-night he had spent an hour in a notorious house; he had been mighty to save, but had met with no success, and had encountered more jeers than usual, and nearly bodily ill-usage. Sadly he turned

to leave the place, and as he did so a young man entered the room. Ernest was directly in his way, and they met face to face. The new comer was Willie Travers. The two stood looking at each other, the conscience-stricken sinner, and the noble man of God. Both were in a den of infamy, but how different their purpose there! See it in the shrinking look and blush of shame, and see it in the gaze of holy pity. None could look on Ernest and suspect him of wrong; Willie did not: the first moment he regarded him in amazement, the next he bent his guilty head and trembled.

"Come, with me," Ernest said, and they went out together. Up and down in the dark street they walked, ceaselessly up and down. The grey dawn appeared, the sun commenced like a giant to run its course: still they paced backwards and forwards, forgetful of time and place, and too engrossed in conversation to be mindful of fatigue.

At last they bent their steps to Ernest's home, entered his garret, and knelt at his bedside. The morning sun, streaming through the window, wrapped Ernest's head in glory as he prayed. A very Garden of Gethsemane prayer! an agony of prayer! and the sobs of the listener mingled with the imploring words. Amen was echoed, and the pleaders rose. A mutual pressure of each other's hands, and Willie went home. So ended the worst night that he had ever spent. Dare we hope that his life's night is also over, and that this morning's light is the commencement of an eternal day!

The next day Willie went down to Crofton, carry-

ing with him all his unpaid bills; for he intended to confess everything to his uncle. Edith, startled at his unexpected appearance and wild looks, begged him anxiously to tell her what had happened. He showed her the bills one after the other, and said,—"Edith, you must break this to my uncle; I have not strength to do it myself; it is hard that you should have this infliction, but I know that you will bear it for me; I cannot receive a cordial greeting and then deliberately unfold my sins. Dear Edith, will you help me in my misery?"

Edith felt crushed to the very soul by this sudden calamity; she knew that her brother had been idle, but she thought that his time was spent in his favourite pastimes, cricket and boating: now she saw bills for bottles of brandy, cigars, a long score for billiards, a debt of honour for cards, two pawn-tickets, the Jew's account and a jeweller's. Willie had been drinking, gambling, and pawning his things; and the knowledge of his sins was almost too much for her to bear. She had so trusted him, so looked up to him; he was everything to her—father, mother, brother, and sister, all in one; and now to find him she had exalted sunk so low!—the shock was too rude; and, as she took up the bills in silence and left the room, her limbs shook so that she could scarcely walk. It was some time before she regained sufficient composure to enter her uncle's study; but at last she did so.

Half-an-hour afterwards Willie was sent for: as he entered the room Edith came out, and he saw that her eyes were red with weeping. Mr. Travers

looked at Willie sternly and scrutinizingly; and as he did so the corners of his mouth relaxed their severe expression, for repentance was unmistakeably marked in his nephew's face.

"Ninety-three pounds six shillings I make out from these documents," he said gravely. "Willie, upon your honour as a gentleman, is this all you owe?"

"It is," answered Willie almost inaudibly.

"I ask you, because any one debt kept back is sure to be the foundation of more. If this total is paid, you will be a free man?"

"I shall."

Mr. Travers wrote a cheque for the amount, and handed it to his nephew.

"I exact no promises in return for this," he said; "you have, or used to have, a grateful heart; I shall expect you to cultivate it, and I think out of gratitude you will avoid extravagance for the future. There, don't make a Mount Vesuvius of yourself," he added soothingly, seeing Willie's breast heaving with suppressed emotion; "explode all your thanks and promises at Edith; she will like it, I don't. Sit down calmly, and listen to me whilst I give you a lecture. Has it ever struck you that the root buried in the cold, damp earth, works night and day in sucking nourishment to feed the early bud lazily basking in warm sunshine? You have never noticed the fact, perhaps, and are thinking doubtless that I have become wonderfully poetical all of a sudden; but be good enough to deduce an analogy from my botanical picture. I beg to state that I have no intention of

acting the part of root, whilst a scapegrace nephew plays the bud. I have made my money by hard toil in an unhealthy climate, and my earnings shall not be devoted to the cultivation of laziness and sin.

"That ring that I see in the jeweller's bill, why did you buy it? Because you had credit and need not at once pay for it, I suppose you will say. But why did you want a ring? You are not such a puppy as to be vain of your hands, and require an ornament to set them off, like a woman? I know you are not. There is no use in a ring, the wearing it is uncomfortable, it is often in the way; you have to pocket it when you handle an oar, or catch a cricket-ball, and you must take it off whenever you wash your hands: then why did you want one? Simply, I suspect, because Tom Jones had one, and you felt yourself inferior without a similar article. Really, my good nephew, you and Betty the maid ought to be brother and sister; missus has a crinoline, and she must have one too; missus curtails the dimensions of her bonnet, and Betty's undergoes a similar change.

"You have spent, I see, a good deal of money in billiards; take my advice and give up the game. Don't spend so much toil in gaining a miserably small end. If you play several hours a-day for five or six years, you will probably have acquired a skill a little above the average; here you will stop and make no further progress, and if you leave off playing for a short time, you will deteriorate. Soon you will take little or no interest in an ordinary game, but must have stakes to stimulate you; and you will generally lose more than you win, for you will always meet with some

players superior to yourself. Is it worth while for this result to remain whole days in an atmosphere of smoke and many breaths, in the company of snobs, sharpers, and other uncongenial companions, wasting your precious time instead of working at your profession, and probably sacrificing your health into the bargain? Consider what a quantity of money you lose in learning to play, how much still you must lose when you have learnt; and think of the bad habits you are sure to get into through evil association. The game of billiards cultivates a childish, unphilosophic habit of mind. Because one ivory ball does not hit another ivory ball in exactly the spot and with exactly the strength that you wish it to do, you stamp fretfully on the ground, and curse your ill luck. If your opponent, not intending it, makes a good stroke, and gains an unexpected advantage, bitter feelings are engendered; there are sneers about all luck and no skill; and, the game ceasing to be amusing, both you and your antagonist are glad when it is over. Having spent a whole evening at billiards, with what dissatisfaction do you go home to bed! your money gone and nothing to show for it; work that ought to have been done—undone; and the brain oppressed and feverish after so many hours in a bad air. And with what noble meditations you retire to rest! 'If I had only made that cannon! If I had not missed that easy hazard! That screw was magnificent. That slip of the cue lost the game. I must practise that cannon off two cushions to-morrow;' and with this high resolve you fall asleep.

Cards are even more to be condemned than bil-

liards. To see grave men seated sedately round a table, engaged for hours at a time in throwing down bits of painted paper and picking them up again—appears to me an amusement altogether incomprehensible. When large stakes are played for, a soul-and-body-killing excitement pervades the game; and with the hope of great gains I can understand perseverance in a monotonous employment: but with winnings of shillings and sixpences in prospective, how people can voluntarily endure a species of treadmill during a whole evening, I cannot understand. Whist, you will say, perhaps, is an intellectual game and exercises the faculties of the mind;—but what a waste of mathematical ability is such a pursuit! What might not a fine whist player have accomplished, if he given the time lost in cards to mechanical invention or astronomical research! What might not the best player of your hospital have achieved, had he devoted his evenings to study instead of to calculating the chances of a frivolous game! It seems to me so unsatisfactory to do a vast deal of brain work and yet gain no result! To sit for three or four hours without moving, learning a succession of figures by heart, reasoning, conjecturing, remembering; taxing all the mental powers to the utmost; exercising the moral qualities also; patiently enduring, or angrily disputing; rejoicing over good fortune, or grieving over loss; full of hope, or sunk in the depths of despair—and yet to reap no reward for one's trying labour, would be to me an imposition far more severe than a night at the crank in Cold-bath Fields. And if you play high, what is

the pleasure in winning a friend's money which he can ill afford to lose? What gratification is there in taking the contents of his purse and buttoning them up in your pocket, when you know that he is distressed, and will probably be obliged to borrow to repair his loss? You cannot chuckle at profits acquired at a friend's expense; and must have a hard nature to feel happy as a winner, when the losers sit before you with dejected looks. So much for winning! the losing side of the question it is unnecessary to depreciate; a pretty general prejudice, I believe, exists against pecuniary loss; and to find oneself minus a round sum of money after half a night's severe intellectual toil, must be a compensation for one's exertions not easy to endure. I see a quantity of brandy in your wine-merchant's bill; and supposing that you could not have consumed the amount yourself, I conclude that you have been entertaining friends. Let me give you a word of warning against these convivial parties. Can you honestly tell me that you have ever enjoyed a debauch? do you not rather fervently wish, the morning after one, that you had never gone? If you could only look at an entertainment of this sort dispassionately through the key-hole, you would think a jollification the slowest thing in the world. Out of a party of twenty, two of the guests, perhaps, are able to sing decently; whilst the remaining eighteen will be made up of voices roaring, voices squeaking, voices tuneless and timeless, big drum, little pipe, and hurdy-gurdy muddled up together into a so-called chorus; or, singly, perpetrating some feeble

sentimentality; or droning forth a comic song, the pith of which depends upon a spirited tune; or, at the pace of a note per minute, crawling over some popular ditty, which even the organ-grinder has given up as stale. To eighteen of such abominations are you compelled to listen before you are treated to a couple of songs. 'Now then, Smith, it's your turn,' says the host.

"'Beautiful star—ah,' raps out Smith, in a voice like a railway whistle.

"'Star-ah-ah,' chime in hurdy-gurdy, big drum, and little pipe.

"'Robinson, you are next. Only know one song, and that you've sung? Nonsense, can't let you off, give it us over again.' And for the second time the company is indulged with 'The Bay of Biscay, O.'

"Why, my good nephew, if you could see these convivialities in your proper senses, you would be bored to death. The pleasure of these roysterers is not even equal to those of the savages: a man in exuberant health does find a sort of ecstacy in screaming and kicking his legs about in a pure country air, as the Indians do in the war-dance; but to sit still and shriek in a close room! bah! I would sooner chaunt beggar-petitions in the streets. It is the rum punch that deceives you, my dear boy; rum punch makes noise and enjoyment convertible terms. If each of the twenty we have been supposing, could bring a bagpipe and put the drone on, how jolly it would sound after the third tumbler! Drink reveals a joke where there is no joke; it makes a man without a particle of humour fancy himself a wag; it

turns tragedy into comedy, yawns into smiles, and grief into mirth. For a short time it surrounds a man with bright light, fair women, and laughter-loving friends; and then the light turns to darkness, the beautiful girls to hideous skeletons, and the jovial companions to grinning devils. Willie, have you never thought of your home when in these drunken scenes? Have you never pictured your sister in the sleep of innocence, whilst you are shouting approval of a coarse song? Has the thought never crossed your mind, 'If Edith could see me now! If Edith could hear me say this unholy thing!' Trusting you, loving you as she does, how could you dare to deceive her! My advice now is that you make your peace with God, and then go to your sister and ask her pardon. When you have done this I shall forget the past, and be again your friend."

CHAPTER XVIII.

REFORMATION OF A FAST YOUTH, AN EXAMINATION AT THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, AND A SUPPER PARTY.

WILLIE's heart was really touched by the Holy Spirit. For a whole fortnight he shut himself in his rooms, and refused to see anyone but Ernest; he came daily, mingling sunbeams with the dark hours of penitence, and brightening Willie's heart by counsel and comfort. It was by his advice that Willie had kept himself from others; he knew how common were fits of religion arising from some strong impression, glowing for a time like burning coals, and crumbling into ashes by contact with the world.

"Avoid your companions," he had said to Willie, "until you have tested the reality of your conversion. In the first feeble days of your new birth, solitude is your best safeguard: alone, you have only the temptations from within to contend against; those from without you can face when stronger."

At the end of the fortnight, Ernest made him promise to meditate on God, eternity, and the state of his soul, for half an hour daily. "Shut yourself up," he said; "lay your watch before you, and think exactly for the prescribed time. You will find difficulty at first in doing this, and your thoughts will

wander to earthly subjects; but soon your mind will get better disciplined, and before long the half hour of meditation will be the happiest time of the day. During these moments all worldly cares are to be put aside, the mind must be abstracted from earth and turned to heaven; and that which at first is a sacrifice will soon become the foretaste of eternal peace. The great source of sin," he continued, "is forgetfulness of God. Prayer is the good man's great help; but prayer is not efficacious without thought: you must think of what you need before you can ask for it. Some men pray mechanically after a set form; others, when they kneel down know not what to say: this would not be the case if they meditated as well as prayed; self-examination would soon find out their peculiar sins, and tell them what to pray against; and each day some newly formed spiritual need would show them what to ask for. If you meditate, you cannot sin thoughtlessly, and moreover you cannot call things by their wrong names. Thought convinces you that a sin is a sin, and not a pardonable indiscretion; and it will not allow you to think right those pleasures which unfit you for prayer. Since I began daily meditation, I have never ceased to thank God for it. I found sins in my heart of which I had no notion; I learnt truth upon truth which I had never known; the Bible appeared in a new light, my eyes were opened and I began to see. Meditation is the means by which you fit the soul for heaven: you give many hours to the cultivation of your mind, the cultivation of your soul is far more important: according to the perfection that you have

brought it to upon earth, so will be the amount of your reward in heaven. And now one more word of advice, and you shall go forth to battle. Don't let any one doubt whose you are and whom you serve. Confess Christ to your companions at once, and your path will be smooth; confess him by halves, and you will have constant trouble. Show others unmistakeably that you have become a Christian: don't let them think you simply more prudent in your ways, or they will imagine a vicious story as acceptable to you as formerly, and will talk to you as a good man never should be spoken to. Say with St. Paul, 'From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus:" let these marks be seen plainly, and wicked men will not annoy you, but will leave you to yourself."

And so Willie went forth into the world again an altered man. He kept his promise of meditation, honourably; but he did not follow Ernest's parting advice. His companions perceived that he was greatly changed, but they could not tell the reason; they saw that he scarcely spoke to any one, that he set himself assiduously to work, and that he was no more seen out at night; and they attributed this change to a terrible fracas with the "governor," or his having been refused by some girl: a calamity, they thought, of some kind had certainly occurred; and it never entered their heads that he had become religious. As Ernest had prophesied, they spoke to him as they used to do; told him wickedly witty anecdotes, and talked of their sinful pleasures as to a brother criminal. Willie would fidget and grow red

during these conversations; he kept silent as much as he was able, and turned the talk whenever he had a chance; but he could not muster courage to express actual disapprobation. When told an immoral story, he would endeavour to look grave; but often could not restrain a smile, though he knew that he was committing a sin.

"When a fellow tells me a good thing that is morally objectionable," he said to Ernest one day in relating his difficulties; "and looks at me, confidently expecting a laugh, I haven't the heart to disappoint him; I can't bear to hurt his feelings."

Ernest told him that every time he countenanced vice by a smile he committed a heinous sin; he reminded him that those who deny Christ shall by Him be denied, and said that he would never be happy until he had confessed his faith. But it was the half hour of meditation that convinced Willie of his duty. That blessed time of solitude tortured him day by day on account of his sin; it flung at him reproach upon reproach until he could hold out no longer.

"I must confess Jesus," he thought; "I cannot rest till I have done so. Sooner or later the trial must come, so I will get it over at once."

An opportunity was not long wanting. He and half a dozen loose-moralled students were waiting in the court for the surgeon's morning visit, when a blasphemous riddle was asked, the answer to which created a shout of laughter. Willie remained perfectly grave; and, when the applause ceased, turned very white, and said—"Whoever invented that riddle

was a great blackguard, and I wonder you fellows can laugh at such a mockery of God."

Having uttered this sentiment he walked quickly away. He had taken a first step to show himself a true disciple, and felt in a glow of happiness. Certainly it was not much of a confession, but it was the beginning of bigger deeds. He had gained one point by his rebuke, nothing blasphemous would again be said before him; of that he felt assured. But meditation soon told him that he must do something more; he must take the sacrament at the hospital chapel and let the students see him stay. It was some time before he could make up his mind to do this; he had never received the communion since his confirmation, and he felt that commencing the practice would be a decided avowal of his change of heart. Prayer gained him the victory, and on the next sacrament Sunday he went to church prepared to stay. At the close of the service he became dreadfully nervous; and when those in his pew got up and went away, leaving him alone, he imagined the eyes of the non-communicants to be fixed on him in wonder as they passed; and, screwing his lips together and clenching his fists, he looked straight before him, and mentally ejaculated — "God help me! God help me!" over and over again. When the service began he was more at ease, though even then he fancied everyone to be staring at him, and could not pray as he ought. He thought that the clergyman gave him a glance of affectionate encouragement as he approached the altar, and administered the bread and wine more impressively to him than to

others. These thoughts forced themselves upon him in spite of his endeavours to give his mind wholly to God; but when he got back to his pew he prayed indeed, so fervently, that he saw nothing and heard nothing until the Lord's Prayer commenced.

When he left the church he felt as one in a trance, his mind was so far removed from earthly things; and for many days after he remained in a constant religious ecstacy; his meditations were full of the Holy Spirit, and his prayers were passionate in their fervour. By degrees he grew colder, and his thermometer, having once fallen, sank so low that he grew seriously alarmed. Now he could never find words to pray; religious duties had become irksome, and he was glad when they were over. This state of things continued for some time, and then the mercury, which had sunk from fever heat to freezing point, slowly rose and remained fixed at temperate. Now Willie became really happy; he had passed through the stages of enthusiasm and indifference, and he began to be a steady, evenly-going Christian.

The first examination at the College of Surgeons was drawing near, and Willie had been working at it for some time. He looked forward to the ordeal with the greatest anxiety; for, having wasted so much time, he was but ill prepared to have his acquirements put to any severe test, and he felt a pluck to be a disgrace that he should never forget. Having, however, made up his mind to go up at all hazard, he put his shoulder to the wheel like a man, and so well did he work for the few weeks that remained, that when the dreaded time arrived he was

far better up in his subjects than he could have thought possible.

On the morning of the examination he was up by dawn, pacing his room with quick nervous strides, stopping occasionally and opening a book, reading a passage, and closing the volume with a bang; asking himself in a severe tone all the difficult questions that he could call to mind, and trying to answer them without considering at an electrical pace; looking over anatomical plates, and trying to puzzle himself by turning them upside down; and, in fact, using every conceivable means of muddling his intellect in the most effectual manner, and so following the fashion of the generality of students. Finally, unable to bear his own society any longer, he rushed off to Wilson and sought consolation from him.

Since his reformation he and Wilson had become fast friends. Willie, when puzzled in his work, always sought information in this quarter; and Wilson, remembering his own difficulties and how he had surmounted them, was able to explain things in a clearer manner than a learned professor who had forgotten his own struggles, and to whom a learner's obstacles were A B C.

"I am glad to find you at home," said Willie, throwing himself on the sofa as if thoroughly exhausted. "I have come to beg for every anatomical question that you can think of. I am in an awful funk, and answering questions is the only thing that does me good; I can't think and I can't read."

"I shan't ask you a single thing," said Wilson decidedly. "What a silly fellow you are to exhaust

the brain just when it is going to be taxed to the utmost. When you rowed against St. Augustin's, you didn't pull over the course a couple of hours before the race until you were quite done up. You take good care not to tire the body before an impending struggle; why don't you keep the mind fresh when it is waiting a like trial? Lie there and talk quietly until it is time for action; and pray keep your thoughts from anatomy until you get into the examination room."

To this wise injunction Willie was obliged to submit. Wilson began to describe a remarkable case in one of the surgical wards; a discussion upon different modes of treatment ensued, and Willie became so interested that the College of Surgeons never again entered his head until he was reminded that it was time to set out for it.

"Don't drink wine or brandy before going in," said Wilson at parting: "your brain is already over excited, don't alcoholize it as well or you will addle it completely. I would not drink tea or coffee either, if I were you; they are sure to keep you waiting an hour or two in that confounded museum; and by that time the stimulus of the tea will have worn off, and you will be more nervous than if you had gone without it. Above all, don't open your note-book whilst waiting; if you are to be plucked, no amount of reading outside the examination room will prevent the catastrophe. To every question give, if you can, the requisite reply, but never answer more than is asked; and don't use book words, or you will be set down as a crammer. I am glad to see that you are

dressed quietly; the examiners are apt to be hard upon a fast-looking man. Now, you ought to be off this instant," he added, looking at his watch. "Keep cool if you can; that is the great desideratum; keep cool, and you have nothing to fear."

Willie shook his friend's hand as if he should never see him again, ran off to the nearest cab-stand, and was soon bowling along in a Hansom to the Royal College.

Upon entrance a card was given him with 64 printed on it in large numerals; and he was ushered with a number of other students into the museum, and secured therein by lock and key. With the sheep-pen or museum, the slaughter-house or examination room communicates by a couple of doors and an intervening passage; and by this exit the devoted flock will every half-hour leak out to the sacrifice in dribblets of four. At present the doors are closed; and, though some half a dozen ears are auscultating the panels, not a sound can be heard issuing from Bluebeard's chamber. The examiners have not arrived; the golden harvest of the morning has not yet been carted in; there are still a few more guineas to be gleaned. The renowned A having just performed a fearful amputation, is now, in the same matter-of-fact way, lancing a pimple on Lady Audley's nose. A poor little baby's rickets are being inspected by Mr. B; and the termination of some nerve-fibres are being traced out by Mr. C. These occupations finished, they will remember the imprisoned flock, and hasten to make mutton of them as fast as their coachmen can drive.

How are the miserables employing themselves during this time of suspense? A knot of students near the door are laughing boisterously, as if the examination were a joke and they the wags who made it. To them the question of pass or pluck seems wholly immaterial; Nelsonian in character, they know not fear. And yet this assumption of indifference is all a sham; a student of Lavater would point to the restless eye giving the lie to the easy smile; he would remark the restless glances at the closed door, the sudden start and flushed cheek as a voice is heard without; and he would tell you that these jovial fellows are a pack of hypocrites, and that beneath the cloak of conviviality are hidden sinking hearts.

Another group are relating incidents of past examinations; telling how one fearful examiner bullied you if ignorant of the most abstruse subjects; how another equally dreaded propounded catch questions which were sure to floor you; how a third put his queries in such a shape that it was wholly impossible to understand his meaning; and how a fourth was fond of asking his own pet theories, which were not to be found in any medical book. Dark allusions were made to certain anatomical specimens preserved in bottles: it was affirmed that occasionally questions were asked on these; and, as it was next to impossible to distinguish one part from another, the wretched victim who chanced upon them was inevitably floored.

There are others walking nervously up and down, muttering to themselves like children learning a task by heart; their hurried, agitated looks, and intense

application being strongly suggestive of an expected birching if the lesson is not learnt in a stated time.

One little man is coolly reading a pocket history of England; he has made himself quite at home in a comfortable corner, and is as deep in the kings and queens as if in his arm chair at home. Since his entrance at the hospital he has almost lived in the dissecting-room; and is so well versed in anatomy that the examination seems to him mere child's play, and he has been looking forward to it for some time as a piece of pleasurable excitement.

Willie is trying to interest himself in the bony structure of the ape; he has been looking at a monkey's skeleton for the last half hour with an eye about as intelligent as the empty orbit he regards; and, discovering at the end of that time that he has made no enormous addition to his osteological ideas, he relinquishes man's satire, and, turning his attention to man, joins one of the note-book fraternity, and asks him ironically how he feels.

"Don't, please, talk to me," says the person addressed, with an impatient gesture, "I am learning the muscles of the back, which up to this time I have never looked at; I have a presentiment that I shall be asked them. Oh! stop a minute," he exclaimed as Willie turns away, "can you tell me what you see on removing the mylohyoid? Thank you, thank you; and will you go through the branches of the brachial plexus above the clavicle? I am much obliged, you are very kind; now I must get back to my muscles."

"If any one is plucked to-day, you are the man," thought Willie, as he passed on.

"You don't seem to funk much, Markham," he said, addressing a young man who was cleaning out his pipe with his penknife, and shaking the ashes on the head of a fellow student who sat at his feet engrossed in notes.

"Not I," returned the other; "I have dissected hard for two winter sessions, and I know perfectly well that I ought to pass; so I am not going to frighten myself at calamities that are never likely to happen. Look there!" he exclaimed, "the curtain rises, and the tragedy begins."

The dreaded door is opened and four numbers are shouted out. Their representatives respond, pass out, and the portal closes. Half an hour after it re-opens; calling and answering are again enacted, and four more make their exit.

At last, after having waited precisely three hours, the trembling limbs of numbers sixty-one, sixty-two, sixty-three, and sixty-four bear their corresponding brains into the examination-room to be picked to pieces. Willie is so bewildered that he actually cannot see; the room seems in a mist, and he can but dimly make out four tables, each supporting a body, and some gentlemen in black clothes lounging near them. He is conscious of having a scalpel and forceps thrust into his hands, and of being told to find the branches of the musculospiral nerve; and in obedience to this command he digs away at something that he believes to be an arm, but could not swear in a court of justice that it was not a leg. The examiner regards his insane proceedings with exemplary patience for a minute or so; then looks

solemnly at another examiner who is standing by to see fair play, and puts on an expression of "He won't do." Willie is now asked another question; and, by this time having partly regained his faculties, he replies correctly: more queries follow, and most of them are answered: the examiners again glance at each other, and now their looks translated are, "He will do."

The clock strikes, a quarter of an hour has elapsed: Willie is passed on to another table, and is attacked by a fresh hand.

"You are not frightened, are you?" says his new tormentor, kindly patting him on the back.

"I—I am a little nervous," replies Willie; shaking like a mould of blancmange.

"You have no reason to be so if you know your work—as I have no doubt you do. Fancy me a fellow-student instead of a grim searcher of intellect; imagine, for instance, that this companion of yours asked you the name of that artery, what would you say? Quite right. And that nerve? Very good." And so they go on swimmingly, Willie having quite recovered himself, and being questioned on a part that he thoroughly knows.

Clock clicks again, and *vivâ voce* is over. Willie has passed it. As he hears the good news he jumps down the stairs with a shriek of ecstacy, and is obliged to be called to order by the secretary. The ordeal, however, is not yet over. There are written questions which he will have to answer some days hence before he can congratulate himself on having "got through." But the *viva voce* was what he had

chiefly feared, as he knew that his practical knowledge was deficient; he did not much doubt the event of the "written," for in book knowledge he was fairly read.

The day for the decision soon arrived, six questions were put before him, and to pass he must reply to four correctly. He answered five, four he thought well, and the remaining one indifferently. The examination was now over, he waited with but little anxiety to hear the result, feeling that he must have succeeded. Still, when he heard the joyful news, he was tremendously excited, rushed to the railway station, telegraphed the intelligence home, bolted into the rooms of half-a-dozen students, one after the other, detailing all his late experiences from beginning to end, ordered a supper to be sent in from the pastrycook's that evening, and invited Wilson and some other "steady ones" to partake of it; and, lastly, abusing himself for his forgetfulness, his worldliness, and his ingratitude, ran home to his rooms, and offered earnest thanks to God.

At supper that evening the conversation was animated and laughter abundant. Examinations were the chief topic, each student relating his individual experiences. One told how this surgeon had frightened him, and that surgeon calmed him; how one had given him "that dreadful internal ear," and another only Scarpa's triangle of the thigh; how, after having worked for six months at the head and neck, not a question was asked upon it; and how, having neglected the foot until the last moment, every query turned in that direction. A waggish

guest told him how poor old Foggy, who had slaved for two years, had been plucked; whilst Sparkles, who had only crammed two or three months, had managed to fluke through: how the latter was reported to have entered the examination-room coolly paring his nails with a penknife, and how he told the most dreaded examiner that he considered anatomy a bore. How Foggy, when asked why the sartorius muscle was so called, said "he supposed because it was first described by a Mr. Taylor;" and how, when the examiner angrily asked him if he knew what idiotcy was, replied that it was an unequal action of the two cerebral hemispheres. How, when told of his rejection, he was at first dumb with astonishment, and then, saying that there must be some mistake, rushed off to make enquiries of the college secretary. This official informing him that the only errors lately made at the college were his own anatomical ones, how he had returned home in a distracted state, and was discovered at midnight by his landlady seated at a desk—his hair stuck up in bunches like porcupine quills, his spectacles on upside down,—composing a gigantic letter for *The Lancet*, setting forth in the longest of dictionary terms an emphatic denunciation of the Royal College of Surgeons, condemning its examinations as outrageous, barbarous, and unconscionably arduous, and pronouncing its examiners sanguinary torturers, tigerish tormentors, and præcordially indurated human flagellators. Other mild depreciations of the same nature followed; and, in conclusion, it was stated that the epistle emanated from an injured one.

After these reminiscences a legend was related of a certain bygone student who had "passed" the college in full jockey dress—boots, tights, spurs, and everything complete. It was affirmed that this eccentric person was such a genius, and withal so wonderfully "well up," that the examiners were not able with any justice to pluck him. They had tried, it was said, to pose him by every abstruse question that ingenuity could devise; they had bounced from one subject to another in the endeavour to confuse him; they had shot queries at him with extreme suddenness, and given him no time to think; they had frowned at him, stamped at him, bullied and abused him, yet they could not disturb his equanimity; he answered everything as easily and quietly as if he were replying to a "How do you do?" and appeared so utterly unconscious that his appearance was unusual or the examination difficult, that the examiners were obliged to accept the joke, and pass him as honourably as if he had been clothed in the glossiest black.

This incident producing a good deal of coughing and apparent difficulty of deglutition amongst the company, and references being made to a serviceable body of men called marines, the relater apologetically added that it happened a long time ago, to which Wilson drily replied that he should have supposed so. Other stories of a similar character followed, and then a spirited discussion arose on medical education. The system of teaching was severely criticised. All agreed that there were too many lectures, and that few gained much advantage from them. "It is im-

possible," said an intelligent looking student, "that teaching can be profitable when the professor and pupil have no interchange of ideas: the learner must tell the teacher what it is that he does not understand, before the latter can know what he ought to explain. Explanation, to be clear, must be conversational, words must not be all on one side and none on the other; the pupil should be able to ask for a repetition of this, or be allowed to say I don't quite understand that. Time must be given for the new ideas to take root before proceeding to a fresh part of the subject. Explanation, without question and answer, without repetition, without pauses, and without a knowledge of individual difficulties, is at best unsatisfactory, and often wholly ineffectual."

"To my mind," said Wilson, "there is one grand fault in all teaching of the present day, and that is the want of practical application of abstract truth. The fact and its application should be taught at the same time: like the two packets of a seidlitz powder, one is no good without the other. Our system of education gives us one packet, but leaves us to find its fellow for ourselves. For example, a master instructs his pupils that the verb *sum* takes the nominative case: whilst dilating on this fact as one of fundamental importance, and impressing it on his hearers by Latin examples—a boy shoots a pea at the window, or sends a 'jack-o'-lantern' bobbing about the ceiling. 'Who did that?' asks magister authoritatively. As with one voice, the whole class instantly protests—'Please, sir, it wasn't *me*.' Is the master astonished that his lesson is so soon for-

gotten, or horrified at the committal of the very error that he has just now been striving to correct? He is neither surprised nor annoyed. To him the English *me* bears no relation to the *me* of Rome; the rules which apply to *esse* having nothing to do with '*to be.*' Had his pupils answered 'It wasn't *I*,' he would have thought it odd, and perhaps wondered that mere lads should speak correctly. These boys leave school with a firm conviction of the legitimacy of 'It wasn't *me*;' they probably adhere to that conviction through life, or discover their fault when it has become a habit too firmly rooted to eradicate: if they do afterwards learn to speak grammatically, no thanks are due to their early teaching. In all instruction you can discover the same fault. Lectures on physiology, for instance, teach us the length of time that the gastric juice takes to dissolve different substances; but they do not tell us how to regulate our meals. They should say, 'If beef take from three to four hours to digest, don't eat a steak for breakfast at ten, and lunch at one.' They should show that an eight o'clock tea cannot be a good thing after a five o'clock dinner; that putting muffins and hot decoction on the top of an undigested meal is like cramming an extra coat into a carpet bag already full—you may manage to stuff it in but you will burst the seams. They state that ligneous fibre is insoluble in the stomach; they should add, 'Therefore don't eat nuts, and peel your pears.' After impressing upon us that diet is divided into calorifacient and nutritive material, they ought to tell us that this is the reason why we take bacon

with our eggs, butter with our bread, and potatoes with our meat. What is the good of my knowing how many cubic inches of carbonic acid I exhale per hour, if I don't see the foolishness of sleeping with windows, door, and chimney closed? or what does it benefit me to be aware that an excess of nitrogenous material is deleterious, if I consider it wholesome to eat meat three times a day? or of what profit is the knowledge that food requires for its digestion a temperature of at least ninety degrees, if I see no harm in sipping iced wine after dinner? Students should be taught how to apply their learning to the details of every-day life; the premises should not be separated from the practical conclusion: the one may seem an easy deduction from the other, but it is not always evident; the mind is apt to content itself with the fact; and if not suggested, its application remains a long time unthought of.—But come, gentlemen," said Wilson interrupting himself, "in abusing our betters we are forgetting our politeness; allow me without another instant's delay to propose our host's health, and offer him our congratulations on his success of to-day."

So saying, Wilson arose and delivered an eloquent address, tickling Willie's vanity by his praises, rousing his ambition by prophecies of future attainments, and foolishly stirring the smouldering embers of his besetting sin, until he almost began again to fancy himself "an admirable Crichton."

Willie, in reply, said enthusiastically that he was proud of his profession, proud of his friends, and to-day he was proud of himself. Hitherto he had been an idler, a mere child, a pig-headed dunce; he had

wasted the precious moments of life in frivolity and self-gratification. He sighed as he thought of the golden opportunities that he had thrown away; he would do so no more; he had been idle, careless, and inattentive: henceforth work should be a pleasure, his book a constant companion, and an up-hill constitutional his only relaxation.

Having delivered himself of these resolves with surprising energy and great gesticulation, he regaled his inner man with a bumper of wine. He had partaken of this refreshment already rather too frequently, to judge by the unusual brightness of his eyes, and the patchy redness of his cheeks; and after this additional stimulus he waxed loquacious, his tongue beginning to wag fast and constantly, and his voice becoming loud and its tone didactic. After another glass he entered into an argument upon a subject of which he knew nothing; and, seeking inspiration from more wine when confused, plunged into such a mass of contradictions that there was a general laugh. Seeing that he was half tipsy and fearing that he would soon be wholly so, Wilson took his leave, and, a general move ensuing, the party broke up.

Left alone, Willie found it impossible to go to bed; his brain was in a whirl of excitement.

"I must go out somewhere," he thought; "I can't sit still. I will turn into a music hall for half an hour, there can be no harm in that—it will be full of bad characters certainly—perhaps I had better go to the billiard room? no, there I should meet all the old set. Q's café might do, I could look at the people and smoke a cigar; no, it is too villanous a

hole, I can't go there. I will not do anything wrong, I am determined; but I must have excitement. Smith's sing-song perhaps is the quietest place—confound it!" he suddenly exclaimed with an air of vexation, "I must do it! I promised most sacredly never to pass a day without. What an ass I was to forget it, and leave it to such a time as this!—it must be done, I shall get it over by half-past eleven, and can go out then; it's only just the hour."

He laid his watch on the table, threw himself in an easy-chair, and pressed his hands to his forehead as if trying to collect his thoughts. He had remembered his duty of daily meditation. Finding his brain incapable of thought, he sponged his head with cold water, and, wrapping a wet towel over his throbbing temples, made another resolute attempt to think. His fruitless effort had taught him one thing; he knew now that he had taken too much to drink.

The half-hour finished, he was on his knees, sobbing forth a broken prayer for pardon; and before he went to bed that night he made a solemn resolution never to touch any intoxicating liquid again. "Drink," he thought, "has led me to the very edge of the precipice to-night. I have sinned through carelessness; I went on filling my glass without thinking; and when in the enjoyment of pleasant society I may unawares transgress again. I can never tell for certain when I am passing the bounds of moderation; when excited a very little may get into my head, and when cool perhaps I can drink a great deal with impunity. This agent of the Devil shall never tempt me more, for in future I will drink nothing but water. So help me God!"

CHAPTER XIX.

PRACTICAL RELIGION, SOME REMARKS ABOUT BEGGARS, AND A MEDITATION ON LOVE.

MEDITATION soon began to convince Willie that he was living wholly for himself, and doing no good to others. "Mine is but half a pure religion," he thought. "I try to keep myself unspotted from the world, but the fatherless and widows I do not trouble my head about. I must commence at once to do some good; the question is, what it shall be? If I could have a class in the school where Edith teaches I should be glad; and I might also take a district and visit the poor. My little medical knowledge would come in usefully amongst the sick. Mr. Graham must be consulted; he will advise me as to the best course to pursue."

Ernest was delighted to hear his convert's wishes; he told him that his assistance would be most valuable at the school, and advised him to call upon the vicar of his own parish, and offer his services as a district visitor. Willie did so; and the clergyman, after consulting his Scripture reader as to the part most in want of supervision, committed to Willie's special protection two or three tumble-down courts in the immediate neighbourhood of the hospital.

Edith actually cried with joy when she heard of her brother's intended good works. He had been twice home since his conversion, but had avoided religious topics as he usually did, and had carefully refrained from showing any change of feeling. Notwithstanding his reserve, the penetration of sisterly love had seen a marked alteration in him. Edith thought him quieter, humbler, and tenderer to herself than formerly; he took an interest in her charities, and no longer made fun of her efforts as he used to do. Once in passing his bedroom she heard him praying, and she knew that such fervent utterance could only come from an awakened heart. Still she could not tell how far the work of grace had gone; he might have only a fit of repentance after his late misdeeds; and when the recollection of these had worn off his devotion would, perhaps, grow cold. But now that he had proposed to do the very thing that he had before sneered at,—to instruct the ignorant, and visit the distressed,—she felt that he had indeed wholly become a Christian.

On the first Sunday of his new vocation, Willie had a tea party at his rooms. The guests were his uncle, Edith, and Ernest Graham. Ernest looked thin; he had fallen away fearfully during the last few months, and for some days lately had kept his room owing to a severe cough. Edith told him that she was sure he did too much, and begged him with tears in her eyes to take more rest. He smiled sweetly, and assured her that since her uncle had scolded him he had been very careful of his health. "My strength," he said, "has failed me of late, but it is not owing to any im-

prudence on my part. At first I was bitterly grieved at finding myself unable to do all my work. Now, thank God, I am happy again. I can say truly that if I fall sick, I am content; and if well, I am content; and if I die, I am content. I have learned St. Paul's lesson and it has brought me peace. Your uncle there, Miss Travers, is my dearest friend; he would do me any good that lay in his power, and would not harm me for the world. If my friend loves me too much to hurt me, will God, whose love for me is greater than a mother's for her infant, do me harm? Surely not; not an ache will he give me that is not for my good. I have trusted him and he has never deceived me, and I will trust him till I die."

"I often wish," said Willie, "that I could realize this text, 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'"

"Ah, if you could believe that promise you would be happy," said Ernest. "To those who love the Lord there is no such thing as evil. A lingering illness cannot be an evil if it draws us nearer to God; even the most painful death must be a joy, if we see the glory of heaven shining through it. Ask yourself the question, 'Do I love the Lord?' and if with St. Peter you can answer 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,' then the promise is yours, and you may trust in its fulfilment. You say that you cannot realize it; then think over it, pray over it until you do. When you believe it, apply it to every circumstance of your life. If you do this honestly, troubles will become pleasures, and griefs, joys. Suppose that you work early and late to gain some end, and

after all your pains you fail in your object; or suppose that you read for a prize and do not gain it; instead of being disappointed you will say 'All things work together for my good,' therefore this is not a misfortune but a new mercy; I will rejoice and give thanks for it. If, when you are rising in your profession, and people begin to point at you as a promising young man—suddenly sickness strikes you down, and compels you to give up all labour, and seek another country; trusting in God's promise, you will say I love the Lord, and therefore my illness is a heavenly blessing. If in after life you make a bad investment, and lose a large sum of money, the text will tell you it is for your good. That cannot be a loss which brings a profit; so many guineas are gone, but something more valuable is gained instead; what it is you may not at once know, but you will know in time, either in this life or in the world to come. Ah! Willie, if I were you, I would write that text in all my books, paste it on my walls, hang it at the foot of my bed. I would have it ever uppermost in my mind; and then for every trouble you shall offer thanks: if your friends forsake you, you shall praise the Lord; if your wife be childless, you shall praise the Lord; if you are poor, despised, and like Lazarus full of sores, yet you shall magnify the Lord, rejoicing in every fresh stroke of the chastening rod, and counting each blow an addition to your treasure in heaven. You will not need pity, for to you affliction shall be but the shadow of a future joy."

He ceased speaking, and Edith gazed at him in holy awe. The text had excited him; it was one

upon which his mind had often dwelt, and, like Willie, he had found it difficult fully to believe. The magnitude of its comfort he had only lately known, and fresh from its good effects he was the more anxious to impress its importance upon others. As he uttered his concluding prediction, his face flushed, and his eyes brightened with enthusiasm; so that he seemed to Edith like one inspired.

"You must wonder at my energy in speaking of this subject," he said, after a short silence; "but, if I had beaten that text into my heart when younger, I should never have known the cares that often harass me now."

"You think, then," said Edith, "that we should not only be resigned under trouble, but give thanks for it?"

"I do," replied Ernest; "if all things work together for good, misfortunes must be ultimate benefits; and therefore, though nature bids us mourn, faith will make us offer thanks."

"For my part," said Mr. Travers, "I believe that three parts of the ills of life are fancied. A man with a fertile imagination may swim in miseries of his own creation. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' is the motto that I would give to the world. That wretched little word *if* causes a heap of misery. '*If* such a thing occur, how unhappy it will make me! *If* this weakness of the eyes increase, I shall go blind! *If* this inflammation of the ear do not subside, I shall be as deaf as a post! *If* these morbid fancies continue, I shall become an idiot! *If* this lump should be cancer, what a fearful fate is mine! *If*

my son should turn out fast, he will be the death of me! *If* my daughter should marry beneath her, I should never get over it! Oh, *if* he were to die!' Oh, *if* she were to prove false! Oh, *if* this were to fail! The death of a sick friend is mourned in anticipation, when in a few days after he will be in perfect health. The husband grieves over his wife's desertion, when she is living with him pure and true. The merchant bewails himself a bankrupt, when his wealth is as safe as if in the Bank of England. By anticipation a man loses his five senses, and suffers every ill that flesh is heir to. By anticipation a wife becomes a widow, a child fatherless, and a rich man a pauper. Take my advice, Willie, in addition to Ernest's, and crush that rascally little *if* under the heel of your clumsiest boot. Never look forward to coming troubles. Avoid saying to yourself with a sigh, 'Oh dear! to-morrow I have to pay that dreaded visit, or make that awkward explanation, or entertain that dreadful old bore.' Don't say, 'I am sure I never can bear it,' or 'I never shall get through it,' or 'I shall be unable to say a word when the time comes.' Do the duties of to-day as well as you can, bear its trials as well as you can, and avoid thinking of to-morrow as much as you can."

"I wish with all my heart, uncle, that I could do as you say," said Willie; "for when any disagreeable is likely to happen, I suffer it in expectation three or four times over. You remember when I was ill some years ago; then I made myself miserable at first by thinking that perhaps I should be imprisoned a long time; but I regained my peace of mind by reasoning

—'I am happy to-day; my books, drawings, etc., give me plenty of occupation, and I enjoy being petted and made a vast deal of. To-morrow, in all probability, I shall spend as pleasantly as to-day; therefore, without the fear of a long detention my sickness would be a nice holiday.' This dread being the only thing that spoilt my pleasure, I threw it from me, passed each day agreeably, and soon got well. I think if we were always to ask ourselves the question, Am I happy to-day? and be contented if the answer is satisfactory, we should be spared a great deal of unnecessary sorrow."

"Or perhaps," said Ernest, "a simpler plan would be to say 'My times are in God's hands;' everything that happens to me must be the best thing possible."

"Many other bible precepts are as little practised as that of taking no thought for the morrow," said Mr. Travers. "I should like to teach people a little practical religion; I would choose three scriptural commands, 'Humble yourselves. Mortify your bodies. Have a right judgment in all things;' and I would apply these precepts to the petty details of every-day life. Under the head of humility I would say, Don't be vexed at a dinner party because so-and-so preceded you down the stairs. Choose to talk to the governess rather than to my lady. Never be vexed at slights, or expect to be treated like the Emperor of Russia.

"When unattended to by servants, don't call out angrily and give yourself airs. When travelling, don't pretend to be a duke in disguise, but take care that your fellow-travellers think you no higher than

you are. If obliged to go to a grand hotel, don't order a dinner above your means, because you are afraid of the waiters. Knowing that your health will be proposed at a public dinner, and having prepared your response the day before, don't commence, 'This is an unexpected pleasure,' and so leave the company to imagine your studied oration to be impromptu eloquence.

"When you go to a crowded church, don't wait standing till the first lesson, that you may be put into a pew, but sit down at once in the free seats. In chaunting the Lord's praises, don't wonder what the people in front think of your vocal performance, but attend to the sacred words that you are uttering, and sing with the head as well as the throat. And so I might go on finding vanity after vanity, all of which ought to disappear if the Scriptures were obeyed.

"Concerning the mortification of the body, I would say, Don't allow the birthday of our Lord to be to your children but the anniversary of three times pudding, or the day of His death but a yearly gorge of buns.

"Don't commemorate each step in life by an unusual feed, or ratify every bargain by an extra drink. A man says, 'I have worked well all this morning, I will reward myself by a bit of salmon, and a glass or two of that old port for dinner.' What an elevated state of mind! 'Hi, Cæsar! Good dog! You have had a hard day's pointing, here's another bone for you.' The parallel is exact.

"If at dinner there is cold mutton at one end of the table, and a roast turkey at the other, and your

affections yearn towards white meat and stuffing, say to yourself, 'I won't be brought under the power of my palate; let others demolish the bird, I stick to the mutton.' Tell your palate that over-indulgence makes the spoilt child, and if he troubles you, punish him with dry bread.

"Don't pinch every pear on a plate till you have found the ripest, and leave the rejected ones to the rest of the company; and, when potatoes are handed round, don't take the mealiest.

"When anticipating some dainty for dinner, don't take unusual exercise to get up an appetite for it; and don't bolt your food like a boa constrictor, but restrain your impetuosity, and eat slowly.

"If the meat is not sufficiently roasted, don't get into a passion; but wait patiently its re-cooking, or dine off bread and cheese.

"Don't disturb the house when the cook is late for dinner, but sit down philosophically and read a book.

"When you can eat no more bread and butter, don't begin upon cake; and when you have satisfied hunger off meat and vegetables, don't take pudding.

"We are preparing to live with pure spirits, and ought to subdue our bodies in this life, and become as spiritual as possible; then we shall be fit to associate with heavenly companions. We ought to make all our pleasures spiritual, to please the mind and not the senses; we should endeavour to be all spirit and no body, and we shall attain to the nearest similitude of what we shall be hereafter."

"Your teaching is highly practical, I must say," observed Ernest, smiling. "I agree with you most

cordially in your concluding sentence; if we would pay only enough attention to the body to keep it in health, and turn all our thoughts to the cultivation of the soul, we should bring earth nearer to heaven, and ourselves nearer to God. But tell me what you would say on your third precept. I am anxious to hear."

"I would say," replied Mr. Travers, "Don't confuse right with wrong. Don't imagine that a night spent in cards is an innocent relaxation; that there is nothing wrong in flirting; that dancing till daylight at a ball is a fitting pleasure for one of Christ's disciples; or that staring through an opera glass at a half-dressed ballet girl is likely to purify you for the kingdom of heaven; or that a sensation novel is the sort of literature to make you fit company for angels.

"Don't think it right to take the sacrament on Sunday morning, and give a snug little dinner in the evening.

"Don't deem it correct to close a year's countless mercies by a foolish dance, and go skipping into another lease of life, as if you said,—'Behold my occupation in the last hour of the year; it is a fair specimen of how I have employed myself during my past life. Behold my commencement of another twelve months, and take it as the type of my future career. Behold me sealing the past year with vanity; behold me with vanity opening the new.'

"Don't think it no sin to propound a scriptural riddle, or to fit a quotation from the bible laughably to a secular subject, and so cast ridicule on God's word.

"Don't imagine it excusable to tell a lie for the sake of giving point to a flat story. A right judgment forbids you to exaggerate in any way. It forbids you to use the plural instead of the singular, to speak of a dozen as dozens, of a thousand as thousands; to describe a space of a few feet as 'the length of this room;' to say that an inch thick substance is as big as your wrist; that you will be back in a few minutes, when you intend to be absent an hour; or that you were only there two or three days when you stayed precisely a fortnight.

"It won't allow you to speak of bumps on foreheads as big as eggs, or of a face swelled to three times its natural size; or to liken a slight pain in the chest to knives or hot irons running into it in quick succession; or to describe a short man as no higher than this table, or a tall one as not able to come in at the door.

"This is a specimen of my practical religion; I should like to instil a few such maxims into certain persons of my acquaintance."

"There is good matter in your teaching," said Ernest, "though you express yourself comically. People are apt to make religion too ethereal, and to shun its application to every-day life. Pride and intemperance sound big sins, but each begets many little ones of its own nature; and these being too small to frighten us, easily creep into our hearts."

"Just so," returned Mr. Travers; "Mr. and Mrs. Vanity we shudder at; but their infant progeny, the six little Vanities, we dandle on our knees all day long. We tremble at a debauch of wine, but too much ice pudding is a pardonable excess."

After this the conversation turned on school matters, and Willie's first essay at teaching.

"Whenever, Willie, you give your pupils collects or verses to learn by heart, never omit to explain them thoroughly," said Ernest. "When I was a boy, I learnt these things like a parrot without knowing their meaning; and when I now read my catechism I involuntarily lay stress upon wrong words, run sentences one into the other, and make nonsense of the whole thing. I learnt it thus in my youth, and the jingle comes back to me now. Most of us could make the same experiment, with a like result; and many see how unprofitable their religious teaching must have been. If a boy emphasize his words wrongly, I should tell him that he did not know his lesson, though he repeat it as glibly as if reading from a book."

"I should like to give my class nothing at all to learn by heart," said Willie. "It cannot be right that learning religion should be an effort of memory: it must be wrong to make the study of the bible like a naughty boy's imposition, and I should think it could rarely produce a good Christian."

"I agree with you," replied Ernest: "learning by rote is a bad custom; religion should be made as entertaining as possible: to interest your children and teach them to love Jesus, is the best plan of teaching, according to my experience. When they are once impressed, they will make rapid spiritual progress."

"They will indeed," said Mr. Travers; "young believers grow in grace like mustard seed in the Holy

Land. Middle-aged Christians make little advance: at a certain point of life the conscience gets toned down to suit the amount of piety possessed at the time. As far as a man has advanced in religion at forty, so far will he probably have got at seventy; he won't deteriorate, and he won't improve. All the pet sins indulged in at this time are retained without being troublesome until the day of death. Conscience occasionally wakes sufficiently to give him a dig in the ribs; but it soon collapses again, and the blow is never hard enough to oust from his soul the tiniest devil who holds a lease there. Those who are saints at forty, die so; those who are then but half saints, only half saints die."

"There is no doubt," said Ernest, "that youth is the best time for religious growth; but you make too sweeping an assertion in saying that all middle-aged Christians are stagnant."

"I do not say all," replied Mr. Travers; but the generality of them never seem to alter. I look round at my neighbours, and I see Mrs. A, who is certainly a good woman, doing the same wrong things year after year:—she exaggerates and talks scandal; and she will colour her stories and abuse her neighbours till she dies. Mr. B, who is a real Christian, never goes to a dinner party without drinking a bottle and a half of wine, and eating more than is good for him; his sin does not trouble him, and he will go on committing it till death. Mrs. C is a good woman, but spoils her children. Mr. D is a good man, but conceited. Mrs. E is a good woman, but bad tempered. Mr. F is a good man,

but stingy: and you may be perfectly sure that the first will never become a just parent, the second humble, the third amiable, or the fourth generous. Their sins are old habits, part and parcel of themselves, and they bring no more remorse than an after-dinner nap."

"It is entirely owing to a want of self-examination," said Ernest. If a person of any age is accustomed to meditate daily upon himself and his Maker, he must advance in godliness to the end of life."

Here Edith discovering that it was time to go, the conversation came to an end, and the party set out for the railway, Willie having agreed to come home until the following day, and Ernest accompanying his friends as far as the station.

On their way, a half-starved-looking boy accosted them and begged for a trifle. Mr. Travers, thinking he seemed in want, was about to give him something, when Ernest interfered, begged that he would keep his money, and, giving the lad a printed ticket, directed him to go to the Mendicity Society, where his case would be enquired into, and, if deserving, he would be relieved.

"That society is a capital thing, is it not?" asked Mr. Travers, as they walked on.

"I cannot speak too highly of it," replied Ernest. "Subscribe a guinea per annum and you can get tickets when you please. If this beggar is in real distress, my ticket will be of far more value to him than your sixpence; for his relief will be permanent instead of temporary. If he is an impostor he will probably throw away the card; but should he go to

the society's office he will be found out, to a certainty."

"I must become a subscriber," said Mr. Travers; "for I am always in doubt whom to give to, and whom to refuse. Begging impostors are so plausible, and their brass so very like 18 carat, that it is difficult to distinguish the imitation from the genuine article. I don't hold with the notion of indiscriminate refusal: it seems the fashion now-a-days to consider every beggar a cheat. 'Better cast your money into the sea than give in the streets,' I have heard many a good man say: every one who craves their charity they imagine to be thirsting for gin. Ladies confuse beggars with burglars. Gentlemen consider them all too lazy to work; whilst many think that rags and riches go hand in hand, and hint at sovereigns sewn up in coats, a hoard in the savings bank, or a comfortable villa at St. John's Wood. A harsh word is a cruel thing to a starving man, and many a rough 'Be off with you' we shall one day be charged with. Unless a beggar is unmistakeably a rogue, without questioning him we should never dismiss him unaided."

"Twenty years ago," said Ernest, "people seemed to give to everyone who asked; now the most piteous pleadings will scarcely draw a penny. The one extreme is as bad as the other; but if men chose to give their time to charity, they might hit a happy medium: if, as you say, they would question beggars, go into their cases, and assist or not according to their judgment—many a death from starvation would be prevented, and many an honest man would be

kept from thieving. Professed beggars you can often detect at a glance. The sailor with loose white trowsers and rolling shirt collar is always a sham. The distressed workman who walks with wife and children through the streets, soliciting alms in a set form of speech, is an impostor. The half-naked man who lies huddled up on a doorstep, his breast bare, his trowsers almost slit in halves, and his coat in shreds—is also a cheat. So is the consumptive beggar who ties a white bandage round his head, and daubs paint on his cheeks. If a man begs of you and says he is a labourer out of work, look for some traces of his recent occupation. If he state that he is a bricklayer, look for clay sticking to his clothes; if a coal-heaver, look for coal dust; if a railway navvy, look for chalk; if a labourer in the fields, look for a sunburnt face, thick laced-up boots and a circular mark on his trowsers, indicating the strap or string that he binds round his legs whilst working."

"I will certainly remember your hints," said Mr. Travers; and the first doubtful individual who begs a penny, shall undergo a microscopic scrutiny."

"Crossing sweepers," observed Ernest, "generally deserve your charity, especially those who have some infirmity: theirs is a poor trade: those who have crossings in fashionable squares or much frequented thoroughfares, make from seven to ten shillings a week; but many others gain no more than threepence a day; the generality, perhaps, earn sixpence, and work hard for their money; they are exposed to all weathers, on their legs all day long, and when it is wet, must keep on sweeping incessantly. Crossing-

sweepers don't make fortunes and leave legacies now, as they did in what beggars call the good old times; they sometimes stand half the day without taking a penny. Blind beggars I would give too; the loss of sight is a sad affliction; they are incapable of work, and are often very estimable characters and truly religious. If you pass a rubbish-gatherer, or a water-cress or groundsel-seller, you may give him a stray sixpence, and confer a blessing: they are the poorest of the poor, and try to earn an honest living; they won't beg of you, but will be grateful for assistance."

Ernest next related some of his own experiences with beggars; and showed how many are so from terrible necessity, and how reprehensible is the rule always to pass by on the other side. Having seen his friends in the train, he set off home; and on his way paid a visit to Edith's protégé, Davis the cobbler. The evening hymn greeted his ears as he knocked at the door, and he could distinguish old Davis's bass and Mattie's treble; but there was a third voice that he did not recognize. Lizzie he had never heard of; and, when the door was opened to him by a pretty, sad-looking girl hardly out of her teens, he thought that she was some friend dropped in for the Sunday tea.

The cobbler was glad to see him. "Any friend of my young lady's," he said, "is always welcome, but your kind face, sir, is a sight for sore eyes."

"I should come to see you oftener," said Ernest, "if I were not so much engaged. I often hear of you from Miss Travers, and she tells me that you are doing well in your trade."

"Thank the Lord and her, sweet soul," replied Davis, "I am doing uncommon well. My darter Lizzie there gets a goodish bit by needlework, through the kindness of some ladies; and this helps me a good deal."

"I did not know that you had another daughter," said Ernest in surprise. "Have you been out to service?" he asked, turning to Lizzie.

The poor girl hung her head in shame, and did not answer.

"I thought you would have known, sir, being my young lady's particular friend," said the cobbler hurriedly. "My darter's been getting her living elsewhere, and wouldn't come home to a beast of a father such as I was to her. Now I'm changed, my sweet girl persuaded her to come back; and she is come, and that's all about it."

Here Lizzie—her face very pale, and a big tear trickling down her cheek—burst out,—

"Father, it's not right! you mustn't deceive him—he is her friend, and I should like him to know what a noble thing she's done. I will tell you, sir, myself—no, father, don't interrupt me; I must speak— She is an angel, sir; she has saved me from the worst fate a girl can have. She met me when I was bold and reckless, and begged me to come home. Her eyes were full of tears, and her voice shook as she pleaded with me; and yet I flung her off with scorn, and reviled and threatened her! She sought me out again: came to my own room; and there, by God's mercy, she touched my heart. She, a lady and an innocent girl, stooped to kiss me! it turned me for the

moment dead faint, but it broke my pride; after that I could hold out no longer. And so you see, sir, she has brought me back to life; I am peaceful and happy now, and every hour of the day I try to pray down a blessing upon her who made me so."

Lizzie's confession took away Ernest's sleep that night. Edith was always before his eyes; he seemed to see her in white garments and a golden wreath of glory, a ministering angel shining amidst dens of vice, chasing the devil from wicked homes, comforting the broken-hearted, and filling the hungry with good things. He had often thought of her as the most perfect being he had ever seen; but never before had she appeared so glorious as now. And Ernest loved her. Yes, he had loved her long; and lately, to his intense sorrow, he had fancied that his love was returned. His own passion he had struggled with, beaten it down, and kept it down by fervent prayer. To-night the smouldering embers again burst into flame, visions of what might be rose before his eyes; he saw Edith and himself at God's altar promising to be true to each other until death; he saw them depart as man and wife, and again, returning, kneel at the same place, and take the supper of the Lord, preserving their souls and bodies unto everlasting life. He saw his miserable attic, and himself lonely and uncared for; and he saw a cheerful room, a bright fire and loving faces. He saw his wife tenderly greeting him as he came home worn out with a hard day's toil; he saw happy children clinging to him, and heard them call him father; he saw

himself, his children, and his sainted wife kneeling before their God, praying as with one soul and one mind, fellow-Christians, members one of another, a tiny flock of Jesu's lambs telling their wants to the Good Shepherd.

"Jesus, help me!" he cried despairingly, "for to-night I am undone. My heart has broken loose. I cannot control it. These thoughts must not be. Oh Lord, with thy mighty arm cast them out; for they are too strong for me. I will never marry, I have vowed it to my God. I have sworn to live solely for the London poor. If I marry, my work must be given up; the small fortune that I have would be swallowed up in supporting a family, and there would be nothing to give to the poor; I should have to employ myself in my profession, and there would be little time to visit the distressed. Now I am free, I spend but a small sum yearly on myself, and all the rest of my income I have for the hungry. None but God has a claim on me, my time is my own, and I can devote the whole day to the rescue of my fellow-men. Never—never will I marry and give up the good cause! Every breath, every penny, every thought shall be spent in the service of the suffering poor! Lord, I renew my vow—hear me; I am thine; body and soul. But oh, deal gently with me! Comfort me! comfort me! for my trouble is hard to bear."

"Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or *wife*, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

"Lord, I thank thee; thou hast heard my prayer."

CHAPTER XX.

CHIEFLY ABOUT LOVE.

FORTUNATELY for Ernest's peace of mind, he was too fully occupied with the troubles of others to think much of his own. He went out early the next morning, and, before going, put into his pocket a number of cards upon which his name and address were legibly inscribed. Then he asked his landlady, if, during the next day, he might make use of a room that happened to be vacant on the ground floor.

"Are some of those poor people coming again?" she inquired.

Ernest replying in the affirmative, she told him that he was welcome to the room, provided his visitors before entering it rubbed their boots on the door-mat, and, as she graphically expressed it—kept their fingers from meddling and pawing about.

These preliminaries arranged, Ernest commenced the day's work. After walking some distance he arrived at the water-side, and, descending some stairs, gained the river bank. A couple of women and about a dozen boys and girls were prowling amongst the barges, and evidently searching for some treasure. Miserable objects they looked, shivering in shreds of

clothes, and toiling ankle-deep in the cold, black mud. The valuables they sought were pieces of coal, wood, or rusty iron, old tin pots, rope-ends, hoops of casks, bits of canvas, etc.; these they sold to the marine-store dealers at so much the pound, earning threepence or fourpence a-piece by the day's labour.

Selecting three of the most promising-looking from this group of miserables, Ernest gave them each a card, and told them to come to his house on the following day. Then he went to the London Docks; and out of a number of starving labourers wanting work, he distributed cards to six, with the same injunctions that he had given to the rubbish-finders on the shore. In the evening he went to the refuge for houseless poor in Cripplegate, and invited a few of its inmates. Later he made the round of some of the workhouses, and amongst the crowd of regular vagrants waiting at the doors for a night's lodging —discriminating the broken-down mechanic, or the workman in distress—he gave them a similar invitation. Early next morning he went to Farringdon cress-market, and gave some cards to the poor little traders who were trying to earn their living. Then coming home, he received his visitors; heard their sad tales of misery; relieved their present necessities; and set to work to find each of them suitable employment. He was writing petitions to charitable people in behalf of his protégés, when Mr. Travers entered.

"Spare me a few minutes, if you are not too much engaged," he said.

Ernest pushed aside pen and paper, and looked

anxiously at his friend, wondering why he was unusually grave.

"I have come to ask your advice about my Edith," said Mr. Travers.

Ernest started, and grew deadly pale.

"She has been so low-spirited lately," continued Mr. Travers, "that I am quite anxious about her; and since last Sunday she has been really ill. To tell you the plain truth at once, Ernest, I think the poor girl frets about you; you have unconsciously gained her affections; and, seeing that you do not care two straws for her, she has tied a brick to her poor little heart, and drowned it in an ocean of misery. I don't blame you, my friend, one iota for this unfortunate catastrophe. You regard my niece not as a pretty girl, but simply as a serviceable female teacher; you consider her probably a young person of enlightened understanding and benevolent intentions, and are wholly unaware that she is a bundle of combustibles ready to explode, flare up, and burn to ashes at the slightest spark of love. Seriously, Ernest, I have been very unhappy lately about the poor child; her bedroom is next to mine, and, the wall being very thin, I can hear her talking of you in her sleep, and sobbing, poor little thing, most piteously. I have lain awake for hours listening to her, and on the verge of crying too; and when in the morning she greets me with a dreadful sham of cheerfulness, and tries to appear light-hearted, with her pillow upstairs still wet with tears; my heart yearns to take her to my bosom, tell her that I know her secret, and cry with my poor darling like a soft-

hearted woman. Ernest! Ernest! what is the matter? You are ill!"

Ernest's head had dropped, and he looked as though about to faint. A glass of water restoring him after some minutes, he fixed his eyes again on Mr. Travers, and, with the air of a martyr resigning himself to torture, motioned him to go on.

"My poor friend," said Mr. Travers, tenderly pressing his hand, "I have distressed you unnecessarily by talking of my own selfish feelings. I meant, when I came in, to treat this unfortunate affair as lightly as possible, and without wounding you, to beg you to keep out of Edith's way; and now I have allowed sentiment to knock my reason down and trample on it, and have made you fancy yourself the most reckless Don Juan that Satan ever produced. There is no permanent harm done; Edith will forget her grief in a year or two; if we don't feed her love, it will soon starve. You must avoid her for the future as much as possible; and, when you are obliged to meet, treat her like an ordinary acquaintance in whom you have no particular interest. Plenty of cold water will extinguish the fiercest fire, and as you have inadvertently lighted it, it is your duty to put it out. Love, you know, my friend, is only a species of hysteria, and a cold douche in its best remedy.—But it is of no use trying to laugh at the matter now," he added, seeing Ernest's grave, sorrowful look, "I can't eradicate the imbecility that I uttered a few minutes ago. We have tumbled into a nasty mess, and must pluck up our spirits and struggle manfully out again."

"Hear me, Richard," said Ernest, hoarsely; "you do not know me—you mistake my feelings altogether. I am not indifferent to your niece; I love her devotedly, and lately I have seen that she returns my love. This discovery has brought me the most bitter sorrow. I cannot recall one word or look of tenderness on my part; I have always been on my guard, and often, when the fever raged hottest within me, my manner to her has been so cold that I have feared afterwards lest I should have seemed uncivil. I have dedicated myself wholly to the cause of the poor; my body, time, and fortune are no longer my own, but God's; I dare not take back my offering and use it for my own pleasure. To marry your niece would be to me an ecstacy of happiness, but I cannot purchase this joy at the price of my hopes in heaven. I am used to suffering, and the Lord will enable me to bear this trial; but Richard, it is heart-breaking to hear of her grief:—of my own sorrow I can say 'Thy will be done,' but the thought of hers wholly unmans me—and to know that I am the cause of it! that I have darkened the light of her youth, and laid upon her a burden as heavy as my own! Have pity, O Lord, it is too hard! it is too hard!"

His chest heaved convulsively, and his emotion choked him. Mr. Travers tried in vain to comfort him, for his sorrow was too deep to be soothed by human sympathy.

"You are very kind," he said; "but I can't talk now. If you won't be offended, I had rather be alone; when I have told Jesus I shall be better."

Smitten to the heart by his friend's distress, Mr.

Travers left him and returned home, darkly philosophizing on human happiness, and regarding life as a very gloomy affair indeed.

His account of Edith was but too true. Her love, deepening and expanding as time went on, had grown to be a burden too heavy for her to bear; and though she managed to appear cheerful whilst in the presence of others, yet alone she could not resist the luxury of tears. She knew that her future path lay through a dull, monotonous expanse. No verdant spot refreshed her sight, tempting her to rest her wearied limbs, and gather vigour for the journey on. She thought that transient human joys were hers no more, and prayed that, if it were good for her, she might be spared the misery of many years, and might pass soon into a future life, where Jesus with a touch should heal the wounds of earthly grief, and, in place of fading pleasures, confer upon her the blessing of everlasting joy.

She had a bright smile ready for her uncle when he arrived at home, and declared that the headache of which she had complained was now quite gone. She was full of enquiries about some poor people whom she had commissioned him to visit, laughing heartily at his description of a crabbed old woman who had told him she didn't want no fresh faces at her time of life, and seeming so happy and free from care that it was difficult to imagine her oppressed by a great grief; and Mr. Travers, whilst he longed that she should take him into her confidence, and pour out unreservedly her bitter sorrow, yet could not but admire her silent fortitude, and respect the

heroism that under a mask of cheerfulness could carry secretly a broken heart.

"I must give this old lady who was so rude to you a hint to treat my relatives more respectfully," she said. "She is very fond of me, and is deeply offended if I omit my weekly visit; so I must make up for my absence by giving her an hour after school next Sunday."

"I have been thinking that I should like you to give up teaching for the present," said Mr. Travers, appearing suddenly to find deep interest in the pattern of the carpet.

"Give up teaching!" echoed Edith in amazement. "Why, uncle, what can you mean? You used to be delighted that I had taken a class."

Mr. Travers remained silent, still enamoured of the carpet; and feeling like a culprit in imminent danger of detection. He had felt compelled to forbid the Sunday teaching, because on these occasions a meeting with Ernest was unavoidable; and his love of truth not permitting him to give false reasons for the prohibition, he could give no satisfactory answer to his niece's question, and felt his situation to be extremely embarrassing.

"I am getting on so nicely with the children that it would be heart-breaking to give them up," continued Edith. "I suppose you think the teaching is too much for my strength; but I assure you, uncle, that is not the cause of my having been poorly lately—"

She stopped suddenly, and a burning blush dyed her cheek crimson. Mr. Travers, unable to conceal

his feelings, was regarding her with eyes full of pity; and, guessing in a moment that he knew her secret, with a look of supplication she burst into tears. And then, with a woman's tact, Mr. Travers told that her love was no longer hidden; that he had long known her trouble and shared her grief; and after trying to comfort her by philosophy without the least success, he opened the bible of his mind to her regard; and there finding stores of consolation, she threw her arms round his neck, said that she had been a wicked and rebellious girl, and for the future she would try to mourn no more.

She did try, and for a time felt happier; but grief like hers could not be at once subdued. Mr. Travers refrained from intruding on her sorrow, and she was grateful for his delicacy, for she could not speak of her feelings; none could share a trouble such as hers; it must be borne alone, and his silent sympathy soothed her more than the kindest words. She was freed now from the arduous task of keeping up appearances; a garment of gay colours need no longer hide the mourning weeds. This was a great relief, for the effort to seem cheerful had been growing harder daily; and many times during the day she had been obliged to seek the privacy of her own room, and relieve her aching heart by a gush of tears.

When Willie came home, she endeavoured again to appear happy; but he, notwithstanding, could not fail to perceive that she was in wretched spirits, and attributed her depression to the misery that she had to witness in her visits to the poor.

"What a noble fellow is Mr. Graham!" he said, one morning as they were walking in the garden; "he seems never to think of himself; his sole concern is the welfare of others."

"You have seen a great deal of him lately, have you not?" asked Edith.

"I often go with him amongst the poor, but he is too busy to have much of me when he is at home. You should hear him talking to little children; he speaks as I fancy Jesus did to those little ones whom he took up in his arms and blessed. And he pleases the old quite as much as the young; he will listen to an old woman's complaints as patiently as if he had nothing to do, and sympathize with her so sweetly, and comfort her so effectually that I sit by in silent wonder. He is a nearer imitation of our Saviour than any man that I have ever seen. Like Jesus he is wholly devoted to the good of others: like Jesus he is patient, sweet-tempered, prayerful, and humble as a little child; and like Jesus he would give his life to save his fellow-men. It is the aim of every Christian to be like our Lord, and I think that Mr. Graham resembles him as much as a sinful mortal can. Do you know, Edith," he went on, "it is wonderful how far and wide he is known amongst the poor: often and often he will be recognized in villanous streets, miles and miles away from his own home. A woman will nudge another, and whisper audibly, 'There's the gentleman who give poor Jimmy the oranges!' or an ill-looking man will come up and ask after some brother thief whom Mr. Graham had got into a hospital; or an English 'God

bless you,' or an Irish 'May the blessed Virgin keep ye,' will greet his ears from persons whom he thinks total strangers. I have been with him in one of the worst quarters, when there has been an awful shindy going on; and directly he drew near the row has stopped, as if his presence were the signal for peace. I have seen a drunken man, who a moment before had been yelling the most horrible oaths, slink away at his look like a beaten hound. Ah, Edith! what would I give to be half what he is! But by God's grace I will follow his example as far as I am able. My professional knowledge, and every moment that I can spare from earning my own livelihood, shall be devoted to relieving the distressed. I have promised myself to God for my whole life; and if with all my labour I can save one soul, I shall have gained what is infinitely more valuable than the highest worldly distinction that ambition can desire."

"Dear Willie," said Edith, looking at him lovingly; "what a blessed change has taken place in you since you first left home! Do you remember our conversation on that last evening?"

"I do distinctly. Then I thought worldly ambition an estimable virtue, and that no progress in civilization could be made without it; I now know that Christ teaches us to be as unmindful of honours as a little child; and I understand also that with a true Christian the desire to benefit others and use his talents rightly, is quite sufficient spur to make him work hard. Mr. Graham has been the means of changing my opinions; he is my preserver, and I shall never cease to thank him to my dying day."

Willie's character was indeed so altered that not a trace of the self-sufficient youth of two years back could be found in him now. He knew enough of science by this time to see how ignorant he was; and he had studied sufficiently to be aware that he was by no means a genius, but simply a young gentleman of ordinary powers of mind, who by patience and hard work might overcome the vast difficulties that beset the commencement of his profession, and in time attain a fair knowledge of disease. How entirely, humanly speaking, he owed his reformation to Ernest, Edith did not know, and she was delighted to hear him attribute his improvement to the influence of him she loved.

On Willie's return to town she accompanied him, intending to have a long morning for visiting the poor. On calling on the old cobbler, she learnt that two of her school children and their mother had been attacked almost simultaneously by small-pox, and were now lying dangerously ill at home. After hearing this intelligence, Edith—forgetful of danger to herself in her eagerness to relieve the suffering of others—hurried to the house of sickness without an instant's delay. So fearful a sight met her eyes when she arrived, that if she had not retreated into the open air she would inevitably have fainted. The mother and her two daughters lay in one bed, and presented an appearance too revolting to describe. Sufficient, therefore, to say that the disease had attacked them in its severest form, and was then at its worst and most disgusting stage. When sufficiently recovered, by a strong effort of resolution Edith re-

entered the room; and giving some money to a half-witted old woman who was acting the part of nurse, sent her to fetch some jelly and lemonade, and remained watching the sufferers until her return. Little did she think that Ernest, having that morning been informed that some of Miss Travers' class had been taken ill, was at that moment on his way to see what comfort or assistance it was in his power to contribute: and she was in the act of holding to the lips of one of the poor creatures a glass of the newly-arrived lemonade, when the old crone hastened to respond to a knock at the door; and Ernest, treading softly as a woman, entered the room. He stepped so gently that Edith, thinking it was some kind-hearted matron come to see after her sick neighbours, did not immediately look round; and Ernest, not being able to see her face, did not at first recognize her in the darkened room. He only saw that a lady, braving a disease which women fear above every malady, was heroically tending her poor sisters; and, without shrinking in repugnance from their loathsome forms, was ministering to their wants with her own hands.

"May God bless and protect you," he murmured.

The lady started perceptibly at the well-known voice; and then a beautiful face looked up at him, and in the devoted woman he recognised his beloved.

"God will reward your heroism," he said, as soon as he could trust himself to speak.

"It was you who first taught me my duty," said Edith, thrilling with joy at his praise. "Before you

talked to me about the poor, I was leading a selfish life. I know now what I ought to do."

"And nobly you fulfil your obligations!" said Ernest, gazing at her involuntarily with a look that conveyed something more than admiration.

Had she seen his glance, the dark page in memory's book on which her hopeless love was written, would have been illumined by such a light that it would have dazzled her to gaze thereon, and the rays shedding brilliancy upon the mournful words that she had thought indelibly inscribed would have caused them to fade away, leaving in their stead a prophecy of sweet companionship and a husband's love; but her eyes were fixed upon the ground, for she could not trust herself to look at him,—and so the secret remained still untold. It was the first approach to a betrayal that Ernest had ever made; and, recollecting himself instantly, he stammered out some common-place remarks strangely at variance with his troubled countenance; and took his departure, blaming himself for want of self-control, and resolving to avoid another meeting with the greatest care, and, when he was actually obliged to speak, to say as little as civility would permit. And then, as he thought of the scene that he had just witnessed, and of Edith's noble self-devotion, his resolution wavered. Love that had been chained down by prayer, again burst his fetters;—his sacrifice appeared too great, and his future life too dark for human endurance. A terrible struggle ensued whether he should serve God or mammon; and many a cry did he send up to heaven for help, before Satan was beaten back and the victory won.

CHAPTER XXI.

ECCENTRICITIES OF A HARD-WORKING STUDENT, OPERATION OF TRACHEOTOMY, ILLNESS, CHRISTIANITY, LOVE AND DEATH.

TIME passed on, and Willie's hospital career drew to a close. He had done well in the competitive examinations, and had gained great credit with the surgeons for his skilful manipulations amongst the sick. He could vie even with Wilson in putting on a bandage; and a fractured limb under his care was never out of position, a dressing never neglected, or a patient through carelessness put to unnecessary pain.

Wilson was now house-surgeon, and his mind was as much as ever absorbed in work; he lived to learn; knowledge was his golden calf, and he worshipped it and sacrificed to it, laying upon the altar his time, his pleasures—ay, and his very soul. He cared little about religion; he had no leisure for its investigation. Night and morning he uttered mechanically a form of prayer, and on Sundays he was regular in attending divine worship; he was a rigid moralist, and would have shrunk from committing any gross sin; strictly temperate, truthful, and self-denying, he had the virtues of a Christian without being one. The clean hands

of the Psalmist were his, but he lacked the charity of St. Paul, without which all his morality was nothing worth. He did everything with the view of acquiring knowledge; for knowledge he ate, walked, talked, and slept. When studying hard he would take that food best adapted to a heavily-worked brain. Wine and beer made him dull; and so, for the sake of study, he was a teetotaler. He took a daily constitutional to keep his brain in health, conversed with his friends to give it relaxation; and slept eight hours that it might have plenty of rest. He had been a smoker, but had given up the habit for some time; he said that it damaged his intellect; that a head muddled by a narcotic cannot reason clearly, and that sitting in an atmosphere of smoke is unfavourable to respiration; not enough oxygen can be inspired properly to decarbonize the blood, and the carbon circulates in the brain and stupefies it. He was extremely methodical; every hour of the day was chalked out. "What shall I do now?" he never had to ask himself; for, when he rose in the morning he drew a map of the day's work, and each hour had its corresponding duty. He allowed an hour-and-a-half for meals, the same time for walking, half-an-hour for conversation, forty minutes for dressing and undressing, eight hours for sleep, and four minutes for prayers; the remaining time was devoted to study, and divided into portions, to each of which was allotted a certain subject. Dry matter-of-fact reading he assigned to the morning when his understanding was bright; pretty theories and interesting experiments to the close of the day, when his mind

was wearied. If unusually dull, he stimulated his comprehension by trying to explain his difficulty aloud, as though he were a professor teaching a pupil; and by this means he often clearly elucidated a description which he had read over a dozen times without perceiving its meaning. When tired of reading, he would refresh himself with a peppermint lozenge and a bottle of soda-water, and deliver a lecture on the subject of his study to the tables and chairs, and explain, describe, and reason in the most animated manner. Sometimes he would give himself a written examination, writing down half-a-dozen questions and setting to work to answer them. He never finished a day's work without asking himself, "What have I learnt?" and he would reply by rehearsing all the new facts gained during the day. A man with such habits could not help being successful, and every honour that he might compete for he had carried off. Now that he was house-surgeon and living with other men, he was compelled to study less and talk more. Willie therefore saw much more of him, and learnt to know him better than he had done before. He admired his talents, and respected him for his virtuous, self-denying life; but he could not help perceiving that his hopes were all centred in this world, and that heaven was wholly obscured by earth. Seeing this, Willie began to reason with his friend; he told him that he was chasing the shadow and neglecting the substance; that when death came his knowledge would be as useless to him as gold to a miser; and that after death, when his understanding was opened, the little learning that he had acquired

on earth would seem so despicable, that he would wonder how he could have spent so much to buy so little. "It seems absurd," Willie said, "to devote all our time to amassing knowledge when in a few years we shall know all things. A high place in heaven is the only position worth working for, and the whole British Cyclopædia learnt by heart won't advance us a step in the world to come. I think that we ought to work hard at our callings, and do the daily labour to the best of our ability; but religious duties should be first, and professional ones second. Prayer, meditation, and charity are the works by which we rise to heaven, and they must be more important than those which get us on in the world. The morning prayer ought never to be cut short for the sake of reading an extra page; holy meditation should never give place to scientific thought, and a visit to a sick pauper ought to be put before microscopical research."

With such arguments did Willie endeavour to persuade his friend to seek first the kingdom of God. He reasoned humbly, remembering that not long ago he too had worshipped corruption; and he pleaded with the earnestness of one who, having lately cast off the burden of sin, was tasting the first joys of a mind at peace. Wilson was at first startled at such an unusual topic as religion, and, during Willie's exhortation, fidgetted in his chair, made monosyllabic replies, and, when the conversation terminated, appeared intensely relieved. By degrees Willie made a deep impression on him — the two began to converse daily on religious matters, and the spiritual fire in the one imparted its warmth to the

soul of the other. Wilson commenced to read his Bible, and really to pray; he took to meditation also, on Willie's telling him how much the practice had done for himself; and, having once fairly struck into the right path, he followed it up manfully, and took much time from his darling studies and offered it as a sacrifice to the Lord, spending it in visiting the sick in the neighbourhood of the hospital.

Willie, being the "dresser on duty," had been living with him for the last week, and had received many a hint as to the binding of broken heads, setting of fractured collar-bones, stitching of gaping wounds, and all such accidents as fell under his province to treat.

And a hard time poor Willie had of it whilst fulfilling his duties. Sometimes three or four times in the night, a bell at the head of his bed, in close proximity to his ear, fired a volley of bang—bang—bangs, making him dream that a bundle of crackers was exploding under his pillow, or that somebody was boring his tympanum with a red hot iron, or that a bluebottle had got into his ear and could not get out again; and the arms of Morpheus not being muscular enough to hold him under such a stimulus, he would tumble out of bed, fling open the window, and shout an inquiry as to what was the matter. "Broken leg, sir," or "Gal burnt, sir," or "Drunken man with his jaw broke," or "Irishwoman with her nose bit off," would be the answer; and Willie would huddle on a few clothes, cover deficiencies with a great coat, and rush to the surgery with all possible speed. If the accident were a "good one"—that is, of a serious

nature—before again retiring to rest he went through a customary formula with the police who brought it in, during which certain coins emigrated from his purse to the official pocket, and an understanding was established that if any other interesting cases should be found lying about, St. John's was better suited to them than any other hospital.

One morning he was roused soon after light, and informed that a coalheaver, whilst sucking a piece of coal to keep off thirst when at work, had drawn it into his windpipe and was dying of suffocation. The porter, knowing from long experience the cases that were too much for the dresser's skill, had called up the house-surgeon for this accident as well as Willie; and, on reaching the scene of action, the latter found Wilson already there.

In the operation-chair sat a burly coalheaver struggling for breath: his eyes, injected with blood, protruded from their sockets, and his complexion had turned to a deep blue. So violent were his efforts to respire, that the perspiration streamed from his face; and, grasping the arms of the chair, he had bent his body forward and raised his shoulders so that he looked like one deformed. Without assistance he would evidently soon have been a dead man; only one thing could save him; an artificial opening must be made in his windpipe without a moment's delay. Wilson was equal to the emergency: quickly and calmly he gave his orders; instruments were brought, and everything made ready with all possible speed. None would think from his manner that he had never before performed the operation, and that he

greatly feared attempting it; yet such was the case; he trembled inwardly, but outwardly he was a very rock. Dexterously he cut into the throat, laid bare the windpipe, hooked it up, and running his knife into it, made a short slit. A gush of air came through the aperture, blowing out the piece of coal; then a deep inspiration was made, and soon the breathing became regular, the patient's distress vanished, and whilst the nurse was wiping the blood from his throat, he dropped to sleep as peacefully as a little child.

"A gentleman outside is waiting to see you, Mr. Travers," said the porter, as soon as the operation was finished.

Willie hastened out, wondering who his visitor could be at that untimely hour. "Uncle!" he exclaimed in astonishment, on seeing Mr. Travers. "Something is wrong! my sister! Is anything the matter with Edith?"

"No, thank God! nothing is the matter there," answered Mr. Travers. "My mission concerns Ernest, he is very ill, and I have been sitting up all night with him. He was called by a policeman the other night to see a dying woman, and, going from his warm bed into a pouring rain, he caught a violent cold, and now is so bad that he can scarcely breathe. I came to ask you to get a nurse for him, and to tell me who is the best doctor to apply to."

Willie was shocked beyond measure at this intelligence; he knew that Ernest's constitution was extremely fragile, and feared that he could not live through a severe illness; he recommended one of the

hospital physicians, and promised to send a nurse as quickly as possible. Mr. Travers then hastened back to the sick man; and Willie, after executing his commissions, followed.

Ernest could scarcely speak, but he smiled a recognition as Willie entered. He looked calmly happy; his soul, rising superior to his tortured body, seemed to typify a future day when it should leave corruption in the grave, and mount on spirit wings to the golden gate of heaven. No sceptical philosopher could look on him without owning that the soul was independent of the body. The flesh was burning with fever, restless, and oppressed by pain, whilst the spirit was undisturbed and full of holy peace.

Neither Mr. Travers nor Willie left him again that day, and they watched him in turn for many days after. Before long, under the physician's judicious treatment, he began to amend; and, after a time, he was able to change his bed during the daytime for an easy chair. Still he did not get well; Nature seemed to have lost her elasticity, and he made no progress.

"Doctor," he said one day abruptly, "am I going to die?"

"We must always keep up our spirits and hope for the best," replied the doctor.

"The best that can happen to a Christian is to die," said Ernest. "But perhaps," he added smiling, "I worded my question wrongly; tell me if I am going to begin to live."

Sadly he was told the truth. Soon he will lie down for the last time, hear his friends' voices for the

last time, close his eyes for the last time. Earth is growing dim, and will soon fade from his sight; he is passing away—even as a vapour he is passing away. The cross that he has borne so manfully shall soon be taken from him, the blessings of the widow and orphan shall strew his path to paradise; and the grateful voices of the poor shall testify of him at the judgment throne,—for they were hungered and he gave them meat, they were thirsty and he gave them drink, they were strangers and he took them in, naked and he clothed them, sick and he visited them, in prison and he came unto them. Faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus! your trials are nearly over. As a sower you have toiled hard, and you shall reap plentifully. A mansion in your father's house awaits you, and it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the joys that shall be yours for all eternity.

As soon as Ernest knew his fate, he wrote to Mr. Travers as follows:—"The doctor says that you are to lose your old friend; you must mourn a little, I suppose, but do not over-grieve: rather rejoice that I am freed from my troubles and made happy, and look forward to the time when, meeting as fellow angels, we shall press each other's hands in the kingdom of heaven. Grant me a favour—the last that I shall ever ask. Let Edith come to me before I die. I would tell her that she has not wasted her affections on a heart of stone, I would confess my own deep love, and I would kneel with her before my God, and pray that our spirits may be joined in heaven. During the last miles of life's journey she has been

to me what Hopeful was to Christian, and I cannot go home without one word of parting. Richard, let her come, there can be no harm now: a short time hence, and in this life she will see me no more. Let us meet once again before I go. I long to comfort her — to join our aching hearts together, and murmur with one voice, 'Thy will be done.'"

Having finished writing he remained lost in meditation. "I cannot—I must not ask it," he thought. "Her affection for me will in time die out if she does not know of my love, her happiness lies in forgetting me. Why should I kindle the flame afresh, and cause her perhaps years of grief, merely for my own selfish gratification? My trial will soon cease, and I will bear it bravely till I die."

Taking up the letter he tore it into shreds, and wrote another, merely stating that the doctor had given an unfavourable opinion of his case, and begging Mr. Travers to break the intelligence to his niece as gently as possible.

Mr. Travers was breakfasting alone when the note arrived, Edith keeping her room on the plea of a bad headache. Constant anxiety about Ernest was wearing her out, and her sad pale face haunted her uncle night and day. To know that he whom she loved was ill, and tended only by a hired nurse; to know that he was lonely, suffering and perhaps dying, and that she might do nothing to help him; that in this world she might never behold him more, and yet that she was forbidden to give him one farewell—were reflections too agonizing for her to bear. They had broken her down, so that she was scarcely equal

to her daily duties, but set about them in a helpless, listless way, as though unconscious of what she did. Before, her grief had been that she was unbeloved, that she had given her heart to one who cared for her only as a friend. Now she lost herself in him; she forgot her unrequited love, and thought only that he was afflicted and she could not comfort him; that he was needing a woman's love and sympathy, and she, who loved him only second to her Saviour, must live idly on and let him want.

Her uncle had evaded her questions about Ernest's state as much as possible, but Edith learnt enough to know that there was still cause for serious alarm. Mr. Travers himself knew that his friend could not recover, having been told so by the physician some time ago. The intelligence in Ernest's letter, therefore, though it caused him more fully to realize the sad truth, did not take him by surprise. He thought more of Edith's sorrow than his own, and was thinking how best to tell her of the grievous tidings when she came to him to give her morning kiss. She wondered to see his cheek so pale; but, after gazing enquiringly into his face, her colour also fled, and, sinking beside him on her knees, she waited motionless the sad news which she had half read in his mournful eyes. He tried to speak, but his quivering lips refused to clothe in words the dreadful sentence that he had to tell.

"Tell me the worst," said Edith, unable to bear longer the agony of suspense. "Is he—dead?"

And then the man whom the world deemed cold and hard, relieved his aching heart by scalding tears,

and, having told the truth, wept silently with the mourner by his side; and then, unable to behold her anguish, to comfort her he told her more—and Edith learnt that she was loved; and that he who loved her had sorrowed as bitterly, and kept his secret as bravely as herself. And, having listened to the story with bent head and beating heart, she hid her face upon her uncle's breast, and murmured, "Uncle, he is alone and going to die. I must go to him."

An hour after, and she is weeping mingled tears of joy and sorrow in Ernest's arms. Purity is joined to purity, truth to truth. Fellow saints united in the holiness of love, let us not pry into your sacred meeting, but reverently withdraw, murmuring as we go, God bless you both.

After this interview Edith came every day; and, though she saw her beloved fading gradually away, in his presence she could not mourn; he was so happy, and comforted her so sweetly that she learnt to look upon his dear, wan face without pain, and could think of his approaching end with a mind at peace. But when absent from him she was not able to be so resigned: rebellious thoughts would rise, requiring fervent prayer to force them down; and often, when her mind more vividly grasped the reality of his coming death, she would burst into a paroxysm of wild grief, and shake with sobbing, until her mind and body were quite worn out; and then she would kneel down and beg God to pardon her, and pray that for the future she might be more resigned.

Poor Willie hung about Ernest like a faithful dog; when he was not allowed indoors he would linger

about the house outside; and it was a work of great difficulty to persuade him to go home to study. When he could be of use, or might sit and talk with his friend, or even watch him, he was happy; but sitting at home with his books required a fortitude that he did not possess, and, when Ernest suggested that it was time for the evening's work, he would beg like a child to be allowed to stay.

One evening, having been inexorably dismissed, he was returning home, when he suddenly started as if he had seen a ghost; for on the opposite side of the way walked—Stanley. Though but two years had elapsed since his departure, he was much changed in appearance: the inevitable beard of foreign travel concealed the lower part of his face, and his eyes wore a peculiar wild expression unnatural to his former self.

"Stanley, old fellow, I *am* glad to see you!" exclaimed Willie, after dashing across the road and seizing his friend by the hand.

Stanley surveyed him from head to foot, and asked coolly, "Who the devil are you?"

"Nonsense!" said Willie, laughing; "the joke is too patent, you can't have forgotten me in a couple of years."

"My good fellow," drawled Stanley, "I have not the slightest notion who you are; so pray enlighten me."

Vexed at such unfeeling waggery towards a long absent friend, Willie answered rather impatiently, "Well, if you must have your fun, my name is Travers."

"Travers," repeated Stanley, consideringly; "Ah! I remember; live down at Crofton, don't you? brother to the little girl who jilted me, eh?—and saved a child in the river once? Of course I recollect you. Come and dine with me somewhere, I am going to feed at once."

"He must have had too much to drink," thought Willie; "and yet his manner does not seem like that of a drunken man. Perhaps he has been eating opium, or some foolery of that sort."

At dinner, Stanley scarcely touched a morsel; but he ordered brandy, and drank an immense quantity.

"Don't you drink, Travers?" he asked. "What is the matter with you?"

"I am a teetotaler," replied Willie, gravely.

"What a d—d odd thing to be! I'd sooner be a grave-digger."

"You will fill a grave soon instead of digging one," said Willie, tapping significantly the half empty bottle. "You don't eat anything. Stanley, you are in a shocking way, and I am quite frightened about you."

"I never eat," said Stanley, as naturally as if he said, "I never take snuff."

"Not eat! why, how do you exist?"

"I go through the form of dining regularly, but I never take more than I have eaten now. I live upon raw eggs beaten up with brandy, and rum with milk; that is my diet; simple, is it not? and, perhaps you would add, stimulating. How is Fanny—Agnes—what's her name—Edith? Is she still in blessed singleness, or united to some congenial saint? Unmarried, is she? Well, I am glad of it. I—am—down—right—

—glad—to—hear—it. I—am—par—tic—ularly—glad—to—hear—it. I—am—un—com—mon—ly—glad—to—hear—it. What the devil am I talking about? I said that I was glad about something: do you happen to recollect what it was?—Ah! I know.—Glad to see you, so I am; you and I were always good friends. Do you remember old Stevens? I saw him the other morning; he came to my bed-side and shook me by the shoulder till I woke. He was beastly drunk as usual, and I couldn't make out much of what he said; but I know he told me that he had been bowled over by D. T., and had a narrow scrape for his life.—By-the-bye, didn't he have D. T. before I went away?—of course he did—and by Jove! now I come to think of it, I believe it killed him. What a contradictory state of things! Come to the opera to-night? You won't! Why what a milksop you have grown! Now I am off to my fellow to be adorned for the evening; I have got so confoundedly shaky lately that I am obliged to keep a man to dress me. Good bye! Love to Fanny; tell her that her old lover has put all the nails into his coffin except two or three, and these he is hammering in as fast as possible. If she should pass my tomb, ask her to have the goodness to distil a tear thereon."

Many months after, whilst taking a country ramble, Willie and his sister came upon a thickset, vulgar-looking man lying on the grass with a pipe in his mouth, and listlessly watching a gentleman who was conducting himself in a most extraordinary manner. He kept incessantly shooting out his tongue like a

chameleon catching flies, and accompanying every protrusion with a grotesque grimace. A crowd of vagabond boys regarded him with intense delight, and occasionally made advances towards him as if with mischievous intent. Then the vulgar-looking man bestirred himself, launched at the intruders a volley of invective, and drove them back like a flock of sheep.

"Lunatic and keeper evidently," said Willie, as they drew near. "How dreadful!" he exclaimed the next moment, with a convulsive shudder. "Edith, don't look! come away directly!"

The warning was too late. Edith, almost simultaneously with himself, had recognised in the distorted face of the maniac the delicate features of her brother's early friend and her own would-be lover—the fascinating and accomplished student, Stanley!

Ernest's life was drawing to a close. Edith was now almost constantly with him, and treasured up his every word.

"Edith," he said one morning, seeing her gazing at him, whilst big tears coursed down her cheeks," when I am gone, comfort yourself by thinking that nothing can stop you in your way home. At one unchanging pace, without a halt, you are travelling to happiness. You must go on unceasingly without an effort of your own. In grief or joy you must journey on, in light and darkness you must journey on. Jesus in the distance is beckoning to you, and you draw nearer to him day by day. Say to yourself when sorrowful—'I am going on; nothing can hinder me, I am going on. My tears will soon be

wiped away, heaven will soon open to me, and all will be joy.'"

She smiled through her tears, and said, "I will try to be comforted; but it is a dreary path that I shall have to tread, and when I think of it my courage fails me."

"You will be chastened, dearest," Ernest said, "but you will have many peaceful hours. I should not like on earth to be always happy; I should think that God did not love me. The happiest moments of my life have been sown amongst my sorrows; for when punished I remember that I am loved."

"Ernest," she said, after gazing at him thoughtfully for some minutes, "sometimes I fancy that when we meet in heaven you will be so glorified that I shall not know you."

"You mean, dearest, that having known me only as the seed, you will not recognise me as the beautiful flower; but when you see me you will also be a flower, and will expect to see others like yourself."

"If I live to be an old woman, shall I be old in heaven? If I had died when a child, I suppose that as a child I should have risen again; and so, if I die aged, I shall be always aged."

"Will a seed fresh from the pod, and a shrivelled grain that has been kept a thousand years, produce a different flower? If you leave the world to-morrow, or at threescore years and ten, your heavenly image will be just the same."

"I am very silly," said Edith, smiling; "but I feared that I might be old and withered when we meet above. I knew that it would be old age

glorified, but still I wished that you should see me young."

"I shall look down on earth and watch you year by year, if the Lord permits me," answered Ernest. If I am not allowed to do so your guardian angels will tell me of you. You are one of Christ's little ones, Edith, and your angels do always behold the face of your Father in heaven: they will keep my earthly treasure, and in a few years they will bring it to my longing arms."

"The time of separation perhaps won't be long," she said; "I don't think that I could bear many years. I am glad the sorrow will be all mine; if I knew that you were grieving too, the trial would be so much harder to bear; but you must be happy, and the thought of your joy will comfort me. My treasure, I hope, has always been in heaven, but it will be doubly so when you are there; I fear that my affections will be so set on things above, that I shall have no heart for the duties of this world."

"Before I go," said Ernest, "I shall have a ring engraved for you. The motto that I shall choose will be one word—*Wait.* If you are weary when I am gone, only *wait;* if you feel lonely, dearest, only *wait;* if life grow dull and cheerless, and you long to come to me in heaven, only *wait,* Edith, only *wait.* The years of separation will soon pass; and then we shall sit at Jesu's feet, children of one father, joined to each other in the communion of saints, never for eternity to be parted more."

So they would talk on day by day, Ernest consoling, and Edith comforted, until his voice grew too

weak for utterance. As his death drew near, Edith no more left him: a bed was made up for her in the vacant room where, but a short time back, he had relieved the destitute; and here, when wearied out with watching, she stole a few hours of sleep.

For a long time numbers of the poor had been coming daily to enquire after their beloved friend, and now that each hour might be his last the house was perfectly besieged. When Edith told him of the crowd outside his eyes brightened, and with great effort he whispered, "Let them come up."

She went down, opened the door, and saying, "Come quietly," led the way upstairs. Another moment and the chamber of death was filled; those for whom there was no room remaining on the staircase outside. Some, as they came in, involuntarily knelt down; strong, hard-faced men sobbed like children; and a little flower girl, bearing a tray of violets, threw herself on the ground in an agony of grief. She was an orphan, and Ernest her only friend in the wide world. He signed to those near her to let her come to him. She came, and, kneeling by his side, ceased weeping instantly, and grew quite calm.

What a sight greeted him as he looked around! Here he saw a thriving workman, who, without his help, had been a homeless outcast. Here a sturdy labourer, who, but for him, had filled a drunkard's grave. Here a robust, matronly woman, whom a year ago he had found under an archway scarcely alive from want of food. And here, a Magdalen—whom he had saved—gazed at him devotedly through

her blinding tears. Precious memories to cheer his dying hour! Glorious vision for his closing eyes! He was ascending up to heaven from the midst of the souls that he had saved. One hand he gave to Edith, the other the little orphan held. Then he looked round him once and smiled, and with the smile upon his face—he died.

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